

DN disabilitynow

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Charity job fears

Supported employment charity Enham has denied claims that it is failing its disabled workers.

Jobs in workshops at the charity's Enham Alamein base in Hampshire are disappearing and workers believe they could be left redundant and unable to pay their rent.

The Enabling Partnership (EP), which has controlled Enham since 2001, insisted no one will be left without a job and the fears were down to "rumours and misunderstanding".

But disabled and non-disabled employees have criticised the "culture of secrecy" which left them excluded from decision-making.

Since EP took over, engineering, electronics and candle-making workshops and a gardening centre have closed down or been sold.

The remaining disabled employees are being transferred

to a packing workshop and many non-disabled workers are being made redundant.

One disabled worker said: "I'm meant to be moving into the packing factory in two weeks after doing my job for 20 years, but I still haven't been told what my role is going to be. People here are very anxious."

He said staff asked managers if their jobs were safe but were "told off" for not using the correct channels.

Another disabled worker said: "We used to have a users' group to air our views, but they stopped that two years ago. They won't tell us how many people are being made redundant."

Two other workers told *DN* that most disabled people end up staying at Enham indefinitely. One man requested computer

training five years ago, but is still waiting to receive it. He now feels emotionally ill-equipped to leave.

Enham said it met government targets to find outside jobs for its disabled workers.

Mike Smith, EP chief executive, said: "Enham is in the process of modernising, and in periods of transition, people feel insecure despite the best intentions. We are sorry people feel they are not consulted, but we've tried to communicate with staff at every step."

"We have disabled people on our management board and are expanding our user panel to ten to represent the views of disabled people. Enham has been reassessed by Investors in People recently and received a positive report."



Star performance: former Radio One DJ Tony Blackburn with a pupil from the National Autistic Society's Radlett Lodge School in Hertfordshire. Blackburn visited the school last month after donating his £198,408 prize from ITV's *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!* to the charity.

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Doc shock

GPs are routinely failing people in medical assessments for Disability Living Allowance in order to maintain their "lucrative sideline" in home visits, an MP has said.

Elfyn Llwyd said some doctors in his Meirionnydd Nant Conwy constituency were known to fail everyone initially, regardless of their condition, because they feared losing payments of over £100 a visit if they were sympathetic to applicants.

The Plaid Cymru MP and lawyer told *DN* that out of 80 appeals he had conducted in recent years, only two had failed – revealing the impact of the "glaring conflict of interest" among GPs. Government figures show 67 per cent of refusals are overturned on appeal.

Llwyd said he received information "day in, day out" of applicants who were mistreated by GPs who failed their assessments. The decisions were quickly overturned at tribunals.

He called other MPs to break the "conspiracy of silence" surrounding the phenomenon.

"I have evidence of at least one GP who consistently ignores what he is told on home visits, puts down the first thing that comes to his mind, alleges people who can hardly walk can walk 100m – and is still carrying out assessments despite being reported to the General Medical Council," he said.

Llwyd raised his concerns in a parliamentary debate in October and was told by Minister for Disabled People Maria Eagle that the claims would be investigated.

Eagle encouraged people to complain if they came across similar treatment and said contractors Schlumberger Sema had a complaints procedure in place which allowed such doctors to be struck off their lists. If you have experienced unfair treatment during an assessment, email: nuala.calvi@scope.org.uk

DDA rights

The government is to introduce new laws to strengthen employment rights for disabled people.

The new rights, to be introduced in October 2004, will provide protection under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) for disabled people in firms with under 15 employees.

They will also extend DDA protection to police officers, fire-fighters and prison officers, although the armed services will remain exempt.

The government has to introduce the new measures by 2006 to comply with European law.

The Disability Rights Commission welcomed the move, but said discrimination in other areas still needed addressing.

On the cover: eight-year-olds Jenny and George work on a disability audit of their school, St George's Catholic Primary in Shoeburyness, Essex, as part of Inclusion Week. See also page 3. Graham Bool Photography

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Call for inclusion

Education experts have called on the government to conduct urgent research into large variations in the rate of inclusion of disabled and special needs children in mainstream schools across England.

A report by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education*, launched as part of its Inclusion Week, revealed "wide and disturbing variations in approaches" by different local education authorities (LEAs).

It included evidence that a disabled pupil in Manchester was more than seven times as likely to be placed in a segregated special school than a child in the London Borough of Newham.

Experts believe that individual education officers' bias and "idiosyncrasies" have undue influence over the amount of investment put into mainstream provision in their area.

Philippa Russell, director of the Council for Disabled Children, said: "We are very concerned about the inconsistencies in resourcing for children with disabilities and special needs in mainstream schools."

"Parents will vote with their feet – if they don't think inclusive education is being given full support and funding in their area, they will opt for special schools."

John Wright, director of the Independent Panel for Special

Educational Advice, said: "The government have nailed their colours to the mast of inclusion. Now they should be explaining these differences and providing guidance to those LEAs not doing as much as others."

"Are the differences down to the kids in that area? No. Are they down to a lack of policy commitment within the LEA? Probably."

CSIE has also called for the phased closure of special schools, after it released a report concluding that segregated schooling "violates children's rights".

* *LEA inclusion trends in England*, £10, tel: 0117 3444007, mobile: 07931 443905.



High wire: Deafblind teenager Nicola Henderson abseiled from Newcastle's Tyne Bridge to raise money for the charity Sense. She was joined by actors Tim Healy and Christopher Fairbank from BBC1's *Auf Wiedersehen Pet*.

Wheelchair fears

Motorised wheelchairs will become unaffordable for disabled people if the government makes third party insurance compulsory, disability groups have warned.

The government has launched a review of motorised wheelchair laws following calls from Labour MP David Kidney who said that a "growing number" of his constituents have complained about collisions with wheelchair users.

But when asked by *DN* how many incidents he was aware of, he said he could "count them on the fingers of one hand".

"These incidents may be occasional now, but I predict they will become more and more frequent if we don't confront this," he said.

Maggie Winchcombe, acting chief executive of the Disabled Living Centres Council, called the government review a "knee-jerk reaction".

"There is a considerable financial implication for disabled people and the costs would not be reflected in benefits or support," she said.

Lyn Laidlaw, head of communications at the Disabled Living Foundation, called for a

"bulk of evidence" to prove more regulations were needed.

"Third party insurance may be compulsory for car drivers, but they have the alternative of public transport," she said.

"Disabled people's inclusion in society depends on their right to own this equipment."

* Motability Finance Limited, the financial arm of the mobility charity Motability, has launched a major review aimed at improving its service and cutting costs.

The move follows complaints from disabled people over the cost of its contract hire and hire purchase schemes.

Abuse laws to come

The government is to introduce new laws to protect people with learning disabilities from sexual abuse.

A new sexual offences bill was included in last month's Queen's Speech, and a Home Office spokesman told *DN* the bill would include "measures on protecting vulnerable adults".

Proposals were due to be published as *DN* went to press.

Mental health charities welcomed the government's decision not to include its controversial mental health bill in the Queen's Speech.

Critics were opposed to the threat of increased compulsory detentions and forced medical treatment in the community.

The Department of Health said a new bill could still be introduced next year.

In brief

Street smart

A new Department for Transport guide* will help local authorities and transport operators ensure pavements, road crossings and public transport account for the needs of disabled people.

**Inclusive Mobility*, tel: 0870 1226 236, fax: 0870 1226 237

Pain is pervasive

More than one in five people are in pain nearly every day, according to new research. Of the 1,000 adults questioned for the Pain Society, 56 per cent of those who experienced pain said it affected their quality of life.

Dogs ride in cabs

A new law will force minicab drivers to accept people who use guide and assistance dogs. The bill was steered through Parliament by Labour MP Neil Gerrard and Lord Ashley.

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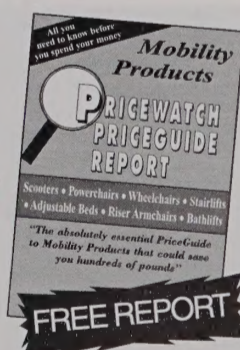
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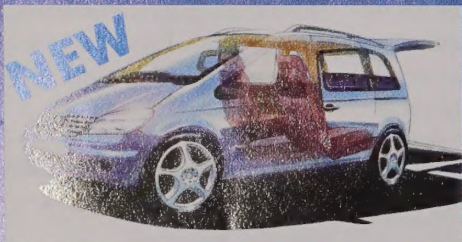


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WARREN PAGE

Lin's honour: DN telephone counsellor Lin Berwick was awarded an honorary doctorate of Civil Law by the University of East Anglia for her work with people with disabilities. Lin, who is blind, has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, founded the Lin Berwick Trust. She was also a runner-up in this year's National Healthcare Awards.

Rights first

A landmark court case brought by a disabled woman against her local council has exposed the lack of support for disabled people fighting for their human rights.

Wheelchair user Dulcie Bernard and her husband are believed to be the first people to win damages under the new Human Rights Act.

They were awarded £10,000 damages against Enfield Council by a High Court judge after being forced to live in unsuitable accommodation for 18 months.

The Disability Rights Commission said the case was "very significant" and highlighted the "big issue" of the lack of an official body to enforce the Human Rights Act.

Agnes Fletcher, DRC assistant director of public affairs said: "Disabled people are particularly likely to experience difficulties in areas like health and housing, and with public authorities. But the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) does not cover these, so we would not be able to help them."

"For people in the Bernards circumstances, to have to find a solicitor to help them for free and to go it alone is a huge pressure."

The DRC has asked the government for an extension of its powers to include human rights cases.

A joint parliamentary committee is considering the issue and will be reporting soon, a government spokesman said.

DN CAMPAIGN



Asda blunders, again

A supermarket cordoned off its disabled parking bays so it could hold a firework display and funfair.

The Asda store in Tilbury, Essex, closed the bays on 14 and 15 October and failed to provide alternative parking for disabled people.

It was spotted by DN reader Denise Shoult and happened only a month after we reported that another Asda store had turned disabled parking bays into a temporary garden centre.

A spokesman for Asda apol-

ogised and said: "As a company, we won't condone them being used for any other purpose than the one they are intended for."

Meanwhile, the RAC has agreed to sponsor the Baywatch awards, which will be held for the first time next year. Supermarkets will be able to work towards a standard award and a gold standard award for disabled parking.

Spokeswoman Nicola Latham said the RAC was delighted to be involved with the campaign.

New deal inquiry

MPs are to hold an inquiry into the government's efforts to increase employment of disabled people.

As part of the inquiry, the Commons' Work and Pensions Select Committee plans to investigate the impact of the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP), as predicted in *DN* three months ago.

Other issues will include the effect of the Disability Discrimination Act, the tax credit and benefits system and the Access to Work scheme.

The inquiry is not likely to start taking evidence in person until the end of January, but it will accept written submissions*. It is expected to report before Easter.

Anne Begg (above), a Labour



member of the committee and a wheelchair user, said the inquiry was "extremely important".

She said she hoped it would "come up with solutions as well as critiques", particularly on NDDP.

She said: "Of all the New Deals, NDDP is the one that perhaps is not working effectively."

One of the problems with government policies was that "sick and disabled people all get lumped together", she added.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) welcomed the inquiry, and said it wanted the committee to examine the Access to Work scheme.

The disability charity Scope also welcomed the inquiry and said it would be making a submission.

A Scope spokeswoman said it would provide a "real and much needed opportunity" to examine the disadvantage faced by disabled people and analyse the government's progress on employment.

*www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/work_and_pensions_committee

More grief from Thai Airways

An airline has apologised to a disabled woman after it sent her a form asking whether her appearance or smell were likely to offend other passengers.

Barbara Howie, a wheelchair user, contacted *DN* about the Thai Airways form after reading in our letters page how the same airline had denied discriminating against a boy with cerebral palsy (*DN* October, November).

She had been sent the form for her GP to complete, two weeks before she and her husband, who is visually impaired, were due to fly to Bangkok from Heathrow last November.

It was the first time in 33 years of flying that she had to fill in such a form. She said: "I was absolutely horrified. I couldn't believe it. My doctor thought I was joking."

Howie said the airline also failed to supply a chair that would have allowed her to visit the toilet during the 13-hour flight, although she had booked it in advance.

She said she would never travel with Thai Airways again.

An airline spokeswoman apologised for the form and said it was no longer in use and must have been sent to her in error.

DN CAMPAIGN Dope denial

Police chiefs have denied there is confusion over their policy on allowing officers to use "discretion" in deciding whether to arrest disabled people taking cannabis for medicinal purposes.

Last month, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) refused to tell *DN* whether new guidance on dealing with cannabis offences would let officers be more lenient to people using the drug to ease medical conditions.

But *DN* has discovered that ACPO guidelines on dealing with cannabis offences already allow officers discretion in cases of therapeutic use.

The guidance recommends that a caution is usually appropriate in such cases, rather than a prosecution.

An ACPO spokesman said: "I do not think there is necessarily confusion."

But he said he did not know why ACPO had not admitted last month that this discretion already exists.

Meanwhile, GW Pharmaceuticals (GW), which is developing cannabis-based medicines, has announced that four trials of its drugs showed they led to significant reductions in neuropathic pain (np), spasticity and sleep disturbance in people with multiple sclerosis and np.

The company now hopes to apply for approval from the Medicines Control Agency early next year, with a possible launch of the UK's first cannabis-based medicine later in 2003.

Five other GWP trials, including studies of drugs for pain in cancer and spinal cord injury, should be completed next year.

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DN CAMPAIGN



David Shenton

Flight insight

Nearly 80 *DN* readers have told us how their wheelchairs have been lost or damaged during air travel.

The Flight Rights campaign survey produced a string of stories from disabled people who experienced snapped chair frames, broken and buckled wheels and other damage to their wheelchairs. Most received no compensation for the damage.

British Airways received the most complaints, but many other airlines were mentioned.

The survey results were

announced as Labour MP Anne Begg and Paralympic gold medallist Tanni Grey Thompson announced their support for Flight Rights.

Businessman Phil Friend, who is leading the campaign with *DN*, said: "It is absolutely clear that incidents of damage are far more frequent than the airlines care to admit. Compensation is often non-existent or derisory."

He encouraged readers to contact their MPs.

*For a survey form, visit www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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Merry Christmas to all our readers!

DN CAMPAIGN



Cold shoulder

A group of MPs have challenged the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle, over the government's failure to extend winter fuel payments.

Labour MP Roger Berry questioned Eagle over the government's belief that people receiving disability living allowance (DLA) can use that money to cover their extra heating costs.

Berry raised points made in a letter by DN reader Tricia Higgins at a meeting of the Parliamentary All Party Disability Group.

But Eagle dismissed all the points made in the letter.

Eagle said: "There is nothing to prevent people from using the DLA for heating. The DLA is a contribution to the extra

costs of disability. It doesn't pretend to cover all of it."

She added: "I am not in a position to promise you that we will extend the winter fuel payments to younger people with disabilities. The policy hasn't changed."

Lord Ashley told Eagle: "We feel there is a powerful injustice discriminating against severely disabled people under 60."

Berry said afterwards that he was disappointed with the government's "incoherent" position and said he would raise the matter in another early day motion in the New Year.

* You can complete our winter fuel survey form on the web (www.disabilitynow.org.uk) or by phoning 020 7619 7323.

See also page 18.

In brief

DRC's tax call

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has backed calls from business for tax breaks to help them meet their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. The DRC said this would "send a positive message".

Charity cash

A radio appeal read by actress

Prunella Scales raised £8,000 for Voice UK, a charity that helps people with learning disabilities who have been abused. The money will go towards the daily running of the charity. Tel: 01332 202555, website: www.voiceuk.clara.net

Strachan selected

RNID chairman James Strachan, who is deaf, has been chosen to head the Audit Commission, the government's public spending watchdog.

RNIB ad anger

Visually impaired people have accused the Royal National Institute for the Blind of reinforcing a negative image of blind people in its latest advertising campaign.

The advert lists everyday activities like "curl up with a good book", "make your children smile" and "complete an application form", which you can do "today", next to a statistic saying "tomorrow, over a hundred people like you will start to lose their sight".

The RNIB said the advert did not imply that blind and partially sighted people could

not undertake these activities.

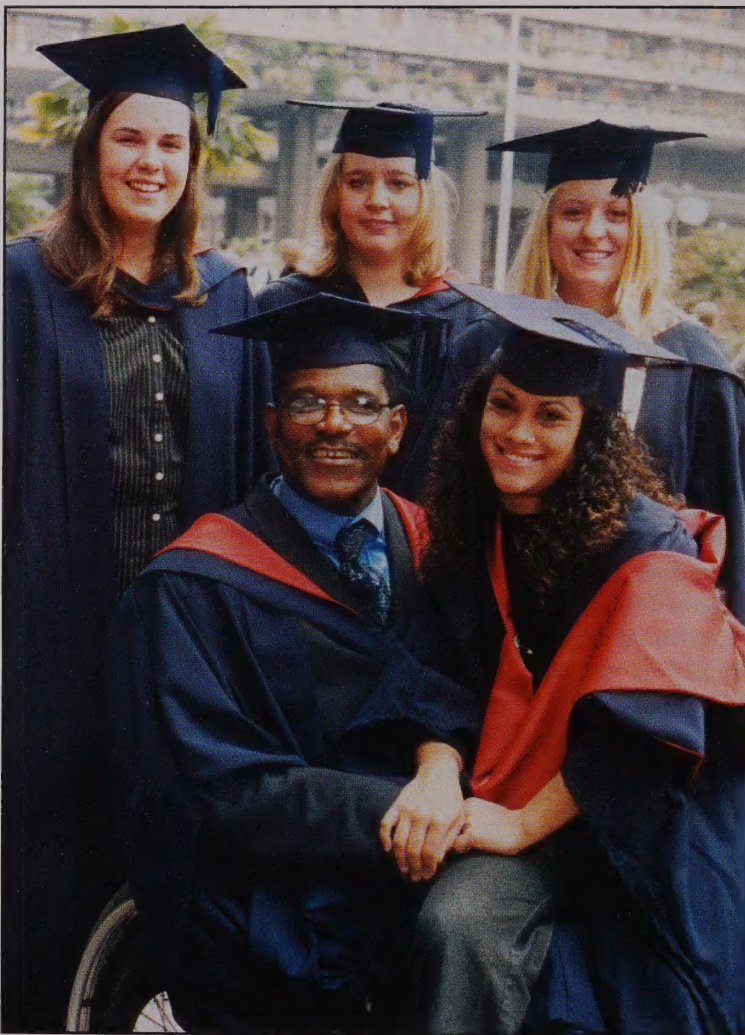
But Alex Stone, London chairman of the National Federation of the Blind and a member of the RNIB's advisory assembly, said: "I don't see how anyone could look at the advert and not feel it implies that, if you are one of the unlucky 100 people that loses their sight, you won't be able to do the things listed."

"How can blind people expect to be treated as anything other than figures of pity if this is the kind of information people are receiving from the largest blindness charity in the country?"

BBC reporter and ex-RNIB worker Claire Jennings said she received complaints from visually impaired people who phoned the Radio 4 programme *In Touch*. They believed the advert reinforced prejudice and ignorance.

She also said the charity failed to show visually impaired people the full version of the ad in focus group trials.

Her claims were denied by RNIB's head of communications, Lynne Stockbridge, the ad's author, who said it was presented in full and received "absolutely no objections".



Let's dance: former brickie Tom St Louis, 54, a wheelchair user, graduated as a dancer and choreographer from the University of East London last month with a Higher National Diploma in performing arts in the community. Tom, pictured with classmates, has set up a dance company, TARDIS, with two other dancers.

Send news to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk, fax: 020 7619 7331

British industry 'badly needs' disabled workers

A leader of British industry has called on businesses to embrace diversity and employ more disabled people.

Digby Jones, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, said there was a compelling economic case for diversity – "we have a skills shortage" – and a moral argument – "it is right to do this because it is fair".

"Companies need to tap into all corners of the labour market," he said.

He pointed out that just to maintain the labour force at its current size would need the number of people in work over 50 to jump from two-thirds to three-quarters by 2010. Yet of 5.2 million disabled people of working age, half have no job.

Jones was speaking at this year's Leading the Way employers' awards in London run by Remploy, the largest employer of disabled people.

He said: "Today's event shows disabled people want to be in work. Business needs them badly. We must ensure that opportunities are there."

Later he told DN that British business would only succeed if, along with creating wealth, it earned the respect of the community. "It is the only agent in Britain that can provide volume opportunity for disabled people."

Work and Pensions Secretary Andrew Smith said: "That's a terrific message from the CBI."

The Trinity Community Partnership in Clitheroe, Lancashire, was named the "UK's best employer of disabled people". Other winners were SDC Telemarketing in Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot College and South Lanarkshire Council.



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Kids starving

Increasing numbers of young people with cerebral palsy are "shockingly malnourished" and their growth and development is suffering as a result, according to professionals.

Lesley Carroll-Few, from Westminster and Chelsea Hospital's feeding clinic, told a conference organised by publishers Mac Keith Press and sponsored by Scope that schools and health services were failing to provide adequate advice on nutrition and feeding to people with cerebral palsy (CP) and their carers after early childhood. Many teenagers and

young adults were reaching a "degree of emaciation shocking in the 21st century", with some weighing as little as three or four stone, she said.

School lunches were often rushed, food unsuitable and independent feeding encouraged at the expense of eating enough. School medical checks were "useless" because they failed to refer people on who were not growing, she said.

The claims were backed by Dr Martin Bax, senior editor of *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, who criticised patchy provision of feed-

ing clinics for children with CP.

Calling on the government and charities to fund research, Bax said too much work was focused on improving motor disorders, while issues such as feeding were ignored.

"The idea still pervades that CP kids don't grow, but we need to ask why they aren't growing," he said.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said there were no plans to undertake research or make feeding clinics more widespread. Schools already had guidance to support pupils with medical conditions, she said.

Accolades for info initiatives

A confidential register of children with disabilities and a resource pack designed by young carers were among the winners in this year's Getting the Message Across awards.

Stockport Disability Database co-ordinator, Elaine Mounter, devised the customer-focused system to gather data from different agencies and distribute it to families. She was praised as a "shining example".

The Young Carers' Resource Pack, produced by Sussex charity Care For the Carers, features colourful, double-sided cards, which include tips on caring for yourself, keeping positive and how to share worries such as bullying and examination stress.

Other winners at the awards, run by the National Information Forum*, included a bank guide for people with learning disabilities.

*Tel: 020 7402 6681.

No home choice

A disabled Manchester woman who wants to move to Cornwall to set up her own business has been told she may have to go into residential care.

Cornwall County Council (CCC) has told June Maelzer, who has already sold her home, it cannot afford the 24-hour support she has in Manchester.

The case is further evidence that disabled people are still facing a postcode lottery in accessing home care services, despite new government guidance for local authorities.

Maelzer, who has a degree in psychology and a masters in disability, wants to set up a

business providing counselling and alternative therapies.

She receives direct payments of £60,000 a year from Manchester City Council, but CCC has offered her just £200 a week or care "in a residential setting".

Maelzer says she is "appalled" at CCC's stance.

"I feel really strongly that anyone else that has my qualifications and status would not think twice about moving," she said. "I do not see why this choice should be taken away from me because I am disabled."

Cornwall's director of social services declined to comment.



ADRIAN BROOKS

Arty party: learning disability charity Mencap launched a national arts strategy, Doing, Showing and Going, last month, with the help of learning disabled musician JC Jamma (top) and MP Martin Linton. Tel: 020 7696 6949, e-mail: francesca.deakin@mencap.org.uk

Abuse 'more likely'

A government decision to postpone checks on care staff working with vulnerable adults will lead to more abuse, according to a learning disability charity.

The Ann Craft Trust (ACT) spoke out after the government said care homes would have until the end of 2004, instead of next March, to check their staff with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Home Office Minister Lord Falconer also said staff supplied by domiciliary care agencies would not need to have checks "for the time being", because of CRB delays in processing applications.

And Health Secretary Alan Milburn agreed to postpone the introduction of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list, designed to prevent unsuit-

able care workers finding posts.

Two months ago, the General Social Care Council admitted to DN that it could take ten years to put all care workers on its new social care register.

Deborah Kitson, director of ACT, said the delays would make abuse more likely.

She said: "It just seems the government are not taking it seriously. We feel like we have taken backward steps."

The Department of Health said it was "firmly committed" to improving protection and would introduce the checks as soon as possible.

• ACT has joined up with fellow charities Respond, Voice UK and Action on Elder Abuse to form the Adult Protection Alliance which will campaign and bid for research funding.

In brief

Know your rights

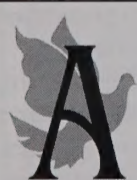
The Disability Rights Commission has issued a free guide, *How Do I Make a Claim?*, explaining how to take action if you think your employment rights have been infringed.

Tel: 08457 622 633, e-mail: enquiry@drc-gb.org

Work experiences

The charity Change is asking people with learning difficulties for their work experiences, including views on how to improve support.

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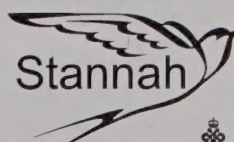
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TRUST STANNAH TO MAKE THINGS EASIER.

DN reports back from Scope's 50th anniversary AGM

Golden opportunity

In its 50th year, with a major internal reorganisation completed and a £3.2m operating surplus after a run of deficits, Scope is set to take a new direction.

"After eight years of introspection, it's about time we got on with the real job of addressing social change and equality for disabled people," chairman Gerald McCarthy said at the AGM in November.

He was echoed by the outgoing chief executive Richard Brewster (below): "We must set our sights outside Scope



and become bolder, building on our strong reputation with government and all those whose decisions affect disabled people's lives."

McCarthy paid tribute to Brewster's commitment to Scope's vision, and to his humour and sensitivity.

Looking back over a year

which marked Scope's financial recovery and the start of the five-year plan, McCarthy admitted: "We had to take some very tough decisions, often in the face of fierce criticism, but no one can now deny that what we did was right."

He believed that the 48 recommendations from Scope's governance working party would lead to Scope becoming a model of excellence for large voluntary organisations.

Brewster reported that Scope continued to deliver quality services. Over the year it had helped 5,500 people, and the CP helpline had handled 14,000 calls. Projects he mentioned included launching an early years information website and support team; supporting severely disabled children in mainstream classes; being the second largest provider of the Workstep employment programme, and training 150 senior journalists in disability awareness.

He warned that Scope must be vigilant about measuring progress on the "incredibly ambitious, but achievable" outcomes of the five-year plan.

Honorary treasurer Les



Unwin also warned that, although Scope was now moving towards improved financial health, "we are likely to report a massive loss on investments next year unless the stock market recovers".

Among McCarthy's concerns was that Scope must employ more disabled people.

"We must practice what we preach," he said. "The new chief executive will be making it a leading priority."

• There are two new members of the executive council: London accountant Caroline Salisbury, 33, who has CP, and parent June Williamson, of Devon. Angela Drane, Pauline Fiddler, David Hayes and Gerald McCarthy were re-elected. There are also three co-opted members: Jon Grover of Kysen Communications Group, James Leiper of Adsum Auxium Ltd and Lizette Gonzales. Over half the council have cerebral palsy.

New man, new direction

Scope's new chief executive, Tony Manwaring (right), 45, who starts work on 3 February, knows what he has to do: raise Scope's external profile. "That's been a very clear message from the trustees."

He has been director of external affairs at the children's charity NCH, and before that was at the British Diabetic Association and the general secretary's office at the Labour Party. He says his experience is in helping organisations develop a vision and achieve it, "so really it's about organisational development and change".

While he thinks the Confederation of British Industry's emphasis on diversity in employment opens opportunities externally, it also has implications for Scope's



own policies on employing disabled people. He'll want to compare Scope with other charities, find "meaningful objectives" and possibly make "real resource decisions".

Manwaring is not disabled. He says the trustees chose him for the skills they needed. "My challenge is to try and help develop people with cerebral palsy so that at some point in the future they would be successful."



Happy holidays: (l to r) Dorothy Docwra, Doris Burke, Melville Docwra and Elsie May celebrate the opening of the Russell Hotel in Bognor Regis, the first hotel to be designed by and for blind and partially sighted people. For bookings, tel: 01243 871300.

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Subtitling slammed

The deaf broadcasting watchdog has hit out at the "enormous" number of digital TV channels who fail to provide any subtitling to programmes.

The Deaf Broadcasting Council (DBC) told the Royal National Institute for Deaf People's Breaking The Sound Barrier conference that deaf people are paying subscriptions for channels to which they have little or no access.

It warned that digital and satellite channels, which will face tighter subtitling regulations under a proposed communications bill, might never catch up with levels on terrestrial television.

Ruth Myers, DBC policy and liaison officer, said many digital channels even failed to show subtitles to repeats which had been subtitled on terrestrial TV.

She called on the govern-

ment to help broadcasters make use of new technology to widen access.

"Sign language can now be transmitted in closed format through a set-top box, but broadcasters are not going to meet the expenses from their own pockets," she said.

The conference also proposed a new government Arts and Culture Disability Access Fund to help venues improve deaf access.

The call followed a recent RNID survey showing half of all arts and tourist venues do not have an infrared or loop system and three-quarters are without a textphone service.

Backing the campaign, film producer Lord Puttnam said new and developing technologies could provide "full access at low cost in theatres, cinemas, museums and art galleries."

News review

A round-up of news in the mainstream media from the last few weeks

Equality merges

The government came closer to establishing a single body to tackle all discrimination when it outlined plans to merge the commissions for disability rights, racial equality and equal opportunities.

The document, *Equality and Diversity*, says a new single equality body would also offer protection against workplace discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, religion and age.

The Disability Rights Commission welcomed the consultation but said the government must couple any single equality commission with comprehensive disability and equality legislation.

Wait a year to hear

An Audit Commission report revealed that patients are waiting up to a year for hearing aids, and called on the government to introduce waiting time standards.

The recommendations were supported by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, which said it hoped waiting times would now finally be recorded centrally.

Landmark suicide

A 77-year-old man with terminal cancer became the first British person to take his own life at an assisted suicide clinic. He died with his family after taking a barbiturate at the clinic in Zurich, Switzerland.

The British Council of Disabled People expressed concern at the development, but pro-euthanasia campaigners called for changes in British law to allow assisted suicide at home.

Stillman supported

Supporters of Ian Stillman, the deaf charity worker imprisoned in India, demonstrated outside the Indian High Commission in London. About 150 protesters presented a letter with medical evidence to senior Indian government minister Mr PC Haldar.

Stillman has appealed his conviction for drug possession. He was denied an interpreter at his trial and the High Court rejected his appeal after ruling he was not deaf.

Grim survey

Nearly one in six young disabled people have been victims of discrimination in the job market, according to a new survey.

The NOP poll for the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) also found that more than four-fifths of those questioned were unable to go on holiday due to transport problems.

Bert Massie, chairman of

the DRC, said: "Many young people we spoke to were enjoying life, but a significant number were isolated and had suffered discrimination. This has to change."

The survey was published to coincide with last month's annual DRC conference, which looked at the aspirations of young disabled people.



ROY HODGKISS

Rock and roll: this digital image won Roy Hodgkiss, of Rugely, Staffordshire, the Surrey Trophy in the Disabled Photographers' Society's annual exhibition. He also won two other trophies.

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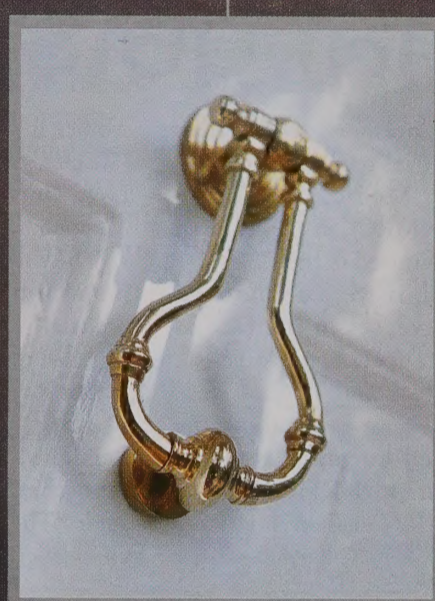
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Parents protest

Parents have criticised the government's "scandalous" failure to match charity funding of research into a terminal muscle condition.

The families spoke out after delivering a 7,000-name petition* to Number 10 Downing Street in which they called for more government funding into Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).

On the same day, they heard in a Commons debate on the subject that the government could not influence how the Medical Research Council (MRC) spends its grant.

Nick Catlin, whose two-year-old son has the terminal muscle wasting condition,

which affects one in 3,500 boys, said the government decision not to match the £1.5m that charities currently put into research was "scandalous".

Opening the debate, Labour MP Kevin Brennan said: "There is currently limited funding for projects associated with so-called rare conditions.

"At current levels, the voluntary sector funds a third more research than the government.

"Charities' rightly find that unacceptable, and they are calling for increased ring-fenced funding for DMD."

Health Minister David Lammy claimed that the MRC would be spending £2m on research into DMD.

And he said the government could not prescribe how research councils distribute their resources.

But the government was funding areas such as genetic research which would benefit people with conditions like DMD, he said.

Campaigners, including the The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, Parent Project UK and Duchenne Family Support Group, questioned Lammy's claim that the MRC would be spending £2 million. They hope to meet the MRC to discuss funding.

*Sign the petition at Parent Project UK, www.ppuk.org e-mail: info@ppuk.org



Special delivery: children with DMD and their relatives deliver the petition to 10 Downing Street with Kevin Brennan, MP (top row, left)

Trial gets terminated Pump provision

A major hormone replacement therapy trial has been dropped by the Medical Research Council (MRC), in the wake of concerns raised in the US.

US trials were abandoned after increases in the risk of breast cancer, heart disease, blood clots and strokes were revealed in women taking the combined hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

The MRC insisted there were no safety concerns for the 5,700

women involved in its WISDOM (Women's International Study of Long Duration Oestrogen after Menopause) study.

The independent committee monitoring the study claimed the trial would take too long to produce meaningful results.

But Ray Fitzpatrick, director of the Institute of Health Sciences, Oxford University, who chaired the committee, said: "There is strong evidence that taking HRT long-term

increases the risk of diseases such as breast cancer and decreases the risks of others such as osteoporosis.

"However, there is no trial evidence that HRT protects women from cardiovascular disease and it may even increase their risk in the short term."

A spokesperson for the National Osteoporosis Society advised women to weigh up the personal risks and benefits with the help of their GPs.

The postcode lottery governing availability of pump therapy for people with diabetes should soon be a thing of the past in England and Wales, if new guidelines are approved.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has recommended the therapy – known as continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion or CSII – should be available for those with type one diabetes whose other treatments have failed.

A spokesman for the charity Diabetes UK said provision of the treatment had until

now been very hit-and-miss.

"Some trusts have gone out of their way to help people get pumps, but with others you were up against a brick wall," he said.

Meanwhile, NICE has also issued new guidelines on drug treatment for people with myeloid leukaemia.

Imatinib, an oral drug which eliminates cancer cells, was originally only available for patients in the advanced stage of the condition but can now be offered to patients in all three stages.

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Waking up Wales

Five disability umbrella groups have called on the parties contesting next May's Welsh Assembly elections to campaign for free personal care for all disabled people.

The five organisations, under the banner of the Wales Disability Reference Group (WDRG), have issued a manifesto setting out a range of policies they want to see adopted.

Disability Wales, Mind Cymru, the learning disability organisation SCOVO, Wales Council for the Blind and Wales

Council for the Deaf have also called for support for advocacy schemes, housing advisory services for disabled people, a review of the accessibility of public transport and improved access to health services.

And they said the National Assembly for Wales should enable every disabled child in the country to attend their local mainstream school.

They also want the Assembly to commission research into employment barriers for disabled people and to pressure the

UK government to review the Access to Work scheme.

David Groves, consultation officer for Disability Wales, said there had been "little bits" of improvement in "little areas" of concern to disabled people over the course of the Assembly since its first elections in 1999.

He said: "We are hoping for much more significant progress in the four years ahead."

The five WDRG members, which represent more than 600 disability groups, will also issue their own manifestos.

Streets of shame

Broken paving stones, pavement cyclists and speeding cars are making it difficult for disabled and older people to walk the streets of London, according to a new access report.

Seven in ten people interviewed for the Liveable London report* said broken paving caused them a problem, while six in ten named cyclists who rode on pavements.

About a quarter of more than 1,000 people surveyed by the charity Living Streets had

complained about walking hazards, usually to their local council, but three-quarters of them were unhappy with the way their complaint was handled.

The report said that older and disabled people want "a good selection of shops within walking distance from home, along safe, secure and well-managed streets".

Among recommendations, it called for more road crossings, government cash for footway repairs, and a 20mph speed

limit for most London roads.

London Mayor Ken Livingstone, who launched the report, said: "Creating pleasant streets, accessible to all, and where people feel safe, is vital in sustaining the vitality of local neighbourhoods."

"I am keen to work with local councils, and projects like Living Streets, to continue to improve the situation."

*£10 from Philip Connolly, Living Streets, 31-33 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ



No charge: Lindsay Black from Ford MAGIC, and Peter Kemp, of the National Forum of Wheelchair User Groups, launched a campaign encouraging disabled drivers to register for the central London congestion charge scheme by 24 December to avoid a £10 registration fee. For information, call the telephone number pictured above.

Study underway

A new study will find out more about the needs of deafblind people in a London borough.

The national deafblind charity Sense has linked up with Hammersmith and Fulham council to analyse access to areas such as health, education, leisure and transport.

Clair Waterman, practice and development worker at Sense

South East, said: "The study will be linked to the new legal requirements on local authorities to improve social care for deafblind children and adults."

The study will be published next March.

* To take part, contact Clair Waterman, tel: 020 8481 3214, text: 020 8541 1938, e-mail: cwaterman@senses.org.uk

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Telling home truths

With high costs and different levels of need, is it really possible for everyone to live independently? John Pring investigates

It wasn't a subtle protest, but it was an effective one.

When protesters from the Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) crashed Leonard Cheshire's fund-raising ball in October and started letting off stink bombs and shouting slogans, they put their message across loud and clear.

All disabled people should be able to live in their own homes, they said, and not in institutions.

DAN's Free Our People campaign has won support from disabled people's organisations and forced the charities running some of those residential homes on to the defensive.

David Colley, chair of the British Council of Disabled People, believes the goal of allowing all disabled people to live independently in their own homes is achievable.

'I can see no good reason why somebody should not be supported to live as independently as possible and in as ordinary a way as possible in a community'

"The real block is that there isn't enough funding," he says. "Any director of any social services department will admit that the government is still avoiding the issue. It simply becomes a cheaper alternative to carry on putting disabled people into institutions."

Kathryn Stone, director of the learning disability charity Voice UK, has worked as a residential care provider and an inspector of homes and is now a supporter of people who have been abused in care.

"I can see no good reason why somebody should not be supported to live as independently as possible and in as ordinary a way as possible in a community," she says.

June Maelzer, a DAN member from Manchester, agrees. She is an advocate for a learning disabled woman who

lives in a group home.

Maelzer says the woman is supposed to be living "in the community", but the style and atmosphere of the home is "absolutely institutional".

For instance, the staff don't let her drink alcohol.

"She loves drinking, but she's not allowed to," says Maelzer. "When I take her out, she drinks as much as she wants to."

"I believe that that person, with the right support, could live on her own."

Malcolm Bower-Brown, a regional director of Leonard Cheshire, agrees that the trend towards independent living for everyone is "philosophically, a very realistic and worthwhile target".

But he adds: "I think there may be some people who, for whatever reasons, may choose to live in small group settings

people who need more residential-type care. "Scope is becoming a provider for that group, for people who can't indicate or articulate what their preferred option is. That is not to say they couldn't live more independently in the future."

She adds: "I think you can have a very empowered existence in a residential home and a very lonely existence in a flat."

Everyone seems to agree that the cost of independent living and the lack of government funding are a major problem.

But what if those tasks currently provided by personal assistants could instead be performed by machines?

Keith Chapman, from Portsmouth University's School of Environmental Design and Management, helped set up a ground-breaking development of flats for severely disabled people.

Three of the flats are designed to be almost completely electronically controlled, with sensors, video cameras, remote controls and automatic locks.

Could such developments banish the need for personal assistants and drastically cut the cost of independent living?

Chapman says this could happen, but it is still a long way off and there is a need for someone with "a big cheque-book" to fund the research.

In the meantime, DAN's campaign to rid the country of residential care continues.

The ideological gap between DAN and traditional service providers like Scope and Leonard Cheshire remains.

On one side of it are the big service providers that believe there will always be a need for small residential homes.

On the other side are disabled people like Maelzer, who herself has 24-hour care.

"I believe everybody is capable of living independently, with the right support," she says.

where very particular support needs can be met, although perhaps a smaller number of people than at the moment."

Besides, he says, providing support for independent living is expensive. "The relative underfunding of social care is a difficulty we are all wrestling with at the moment."

He says Leonard Cheshire's emphasis is now on developing a range of different services to replace the big, old-fashioned residential homes of the past.

Scope is another large charity which provides services for disabled people. It, too, is moving towards replacing its few remaining large residential homes with smaller, less institutional situations.

But Rita McCormack, Scope's assistant director of independent living, says there will always be some disabled

in a home," he says.

He had to queue for a bath and put his name down days in advance if he wanted to go out.

"It made me feel miserable," he says. "They didn't make you feel as if you had control over your own life."

The Scope-run home has closed and been converted into

supported flats. Now Punton lives in a rented bungalow and has a 24-hour care package.

"I am a lot happier and more independent than I ever was when I was in residential care," he says. "I have extreme dependence, but if I can live on my own there is no reason why everybody else cannot."



Donna Hazell (above) has lived independently in her flat in north London since 1995.

She has an hour-and-a-half of support from a carer every morning and another hour every evening. She is helped with tasks such as getting up in the morning, ironing and cleaning.

She believes all disabled people are capable of living independently, but only if they have the "right support and the right care package".

"You rely on people coming in. It makes me very

insecure. You hope they are going to turn up. There have been a few occasions when my carer has turned up really late or has not turned up at all and I have not been informed. I have been stuck in bed."

Hazell has visited friends in residential homes.

"I couldn't imagine living in one of those places," she says. "I have seen friends being told what to do and how to do things, and I don't like that."

"You're not your own person in a place like that. You're not your own boss."

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Living life on a conveyor belt

Disabled activist Rob Punton spent three years in a residential home before moving into a bungalow in Birmingham.

He says residential care made him feel like a chicken on a battery farm.

"It felt like a conveyor belt. It felt like you were in a human factory rather than



Car struck

Douglas Campbell came back from the 2002 Motor Show with the latest in wheels

Over half a million people visited the 2002 Motor Show at the National Exhibition Centre in the West Midlands. The organisers reckon that between them the visitors consumed 100,000 beef burgers, 267,000 cups of tea, 83,000 pints of beer and 3,700 bottles of wine!

Citroen caught my eye with their new versatile C3 Pluriel, fixed high on a wall. Its major innovation is an adaptable roof system that offers five different configurations enabling it to move from a "snug supermini to an open pick-up". This unusual looking car has a retractable canvas roof, removable side roof pillars and a pick-up style, bottom-hinged boot.

Also on Citroen's stand was the stunning C-Airdream.

Unlike many concept cars, this one really looks like it could hit the road in an exciting way before very long.

Daewoo were back after a spell when troubles in Korea left the company facing insolvency and exclusion from the Motability scheme.

General Motors, owners of Vauxhall and Opel in Europe, have taken over the car side of Daewoo with a new company, GM Daewoo, which was formed just six days before the show.

Daewoo are known for high levels of customer service and extremely competitive pricing, and they expect to maintain them. Daewoo was formerly a very strong player in the

Motability scheme and I feel sure we will soon see them back there offering super value for money.

Newly launched on the Daewoo stand was the Kalos, a small five-door hatch starting at a very competitive £7,495. This looked smart, modern and nicely finished and should prove a great success.

A visit to the Morgan stand was a must. The bright yellow classic Plus 8 had a look that few can resist – until they try to climb in, let alone find a space for a wheelchair! Morgan is renowned for long waiting lists for new cars, but due to increased production, customers at the Motor Show were offered delivery before the end of 2003. Who can wait that long for a shiny new toy?

A visit to Hall 4 made me suddenly realise the size of the Ford Motor Company empire. Jaguar, Aston Martin, Volvo, Mazda, Land Rover and Ford, all members of the Ford Group, occupied almost the entire hall.

Part of the Ford display featured the cars from the forthcoming James Bond film *Die Another Day*. The Aston Martin Vanquish came with rocket launchers in the front bumper and bonnet mounted twin machine guns. It looks like 007 has finally found a solution to the abuse of disabled parking bays!

The only stand that appeared to be targeting disabled customers was

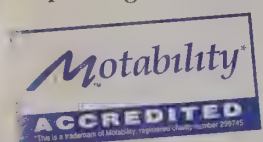


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Renault Trafic. 1.9 litre diesel, V Reg, Feb 2000, 9,000 miles, metallic red, lightweight ramp, two rear seats. £9,250

Citroen Berlingo. 1.8 litre diesel. V Reg, Oct 1999, 11,500 miles, green, lowered floor, lightweight ramp. one rear seat. £10,000

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Vauxhall. The very popular Vauxhall Zafira was used to demonstrate how a substantial electric scooter could be loaded in the back without being dismantled by using a car mounted electric hoist.

Also on the Vauxhall stand was a chance for a sneak preview of the Vauxhall Meriva mini-MPV. Not much bigger than a Corsa, this new car will offer enormously flexible seating that can fold totally flat or slide backwards and sideways. The scope for loading assorted mobility equipment is amazing. If the price is right this will be a certain winner on the Motability scheme.

The new Nissan Micra goes on sale on 23 January and big crowds gathered round the stand to get a first look at this exciting little car. First to hit the eye is the bold new look that is right up-to-date and definitely different from the previous model. It also has an all new chassis and the five available engines – including diesel units for the first time – are either new or extensively revised. Even the base model comes with electric power steering, tilt steering wheel adjust, front electric windows, remote central locking, anti-lock brakes, two airbags, five full seat belts, electric rear tailgate release, pollen filter and CD/radio. The Micra has always been popular on the Motability scheme and the new model should continue to be a winner with many disabled people.

Peugeot continue to offer a



The Citroen Pluriel (above) comes equipped with a flexible roof system, while Daewoo makes a comeback with the Kalos (below)

wide range of cars on the Motability scheme and are proving increasingly popular with disabled people. On the stand, the 206SW showed a style currently unique to Peugeot. It is like a reduced

automatic transmission on the 206SW at the moment.

Also on the stand were their wide range of cars, including the 307, which meets the varied needs of so many disabled customers.

'The organisers reckon that between them, the visitors consumed 100,000 beef burgers, 267,000 cups of tea, 83,000 pints of beer and 3,700 bottles of wine!'

estate, with significantly more rear space than the hatchback. Well worth looking at when you want to load wheelchairs and scooters. Unlike the 206 hatchback, there is no

And when you had finished all the serious work, you could continue to dream. Jaguar displayed their timeless designs that are kept right up-to-the-minute. The hand-built Aston Martins, very popular with celebrities, were there. Bentley, with their new Continental GT, definitely has a very different looking front grille – or is it a giant Parmesan cheese grater? Ferrari, with their new Enzo, has a totally pointless top speed of 217mph, but who cares – it's a Ferrari and its red and Michael Schumacher drives their Formula 1 racing car! Douglas Campbell is chief executive of the Disabled Drivers' Association.



Space age: Lynne Wilkinson loads a scooter into the Vauxhall Zafira (above), and the new Nissan Micra (below) should be a hit



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Warwick's castle

Warwick Davis found fame as an actor and has built a successful talent agency. Lucy Glynn caught up with him just as *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* was released

It took a make-up artist four hours to turn Warwick Davis, an actor with restricted growth (or a "small person", as he calls himself), into Professor Flitwick, one of the teachers in the new Harry Potter film.

But Davis is not complaining: "It's just such an honour. It's one of those parts I really wanted. To get the opportunity to do that, it's what I live for."

He built the whole set, so the characters were sat down in the Great Hall it was a totally believable, magical experience. It was so festive at one of the times, we felt like eating the turkey."

But then Davis is positive about most things. Including his disability. "Disability is what you make of it," he says. "I know I am not particularly hard done by. I have physical limitations

the first *Star Wars* film. Since then, he has starred in *Labyrinth*, played the title role in *Willow* and acted in television productions including *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Chronicles of Narnia* as well as pantomimes and adverts.

Although Davis, who is three feet six inches tall, is a successful actor, he became fed up with agents treating small people like "a commodity".

"Agents would ask for a couple of dwarves, skills irrelevant," he says.

So, in 1995, he set up an agency for short actors with his father-in-law Peter Burroughs, another short actor. They believed it would raise the profile of small actors and increase their wages.

Willow Personal Management now has over 80 actors on its books. They even get applications from

was created to represent people over seven feet.

Davis says Willow is Equity's first choice for producers looking for small actors.

Not only does this mean his clients get more work – they are also recognised for their ability and not just for their height. "I look at each person as an individual. I look at their talents," he says.

Despite his success, he is still frustrated by the entertainment industry's reluctance to cast disabled people. He says producers feel they have to explain why a disabled person has been cast by constructing an elaborate plot. "In life, they are just there."

Davis also claims that producers who use small actors believe they will be criticised for cashing in on the novelty factor. Something, he says, that can only be overcome by making small people more common in films and on television.

He is angry that more people seem to get away with making fun of small people, compared with those with other disabilities.

"Dwarves in the past set us up to be a spectacle, to be a figure of fun. People haven't caught up with the idea that



At ease: Warwick Davis takes a breather from his busy schedule

this isn't how it is now."

He takes this into account when deciding to accept work. "I look at a job and think, 'is the character going to be fulfilling to play? Is there a message in what I am doing?' I try not to do things that reflect badly on small people."

His fame has made potentially difficult situations

more humorous. When people stare at him in the street, he says: "I can't give them attitude for looking at me because I don't know if they are looking at me because I am small or they remember me from a film."

But Davis hasn't let fame go to his head and is remarkably down-to-earth.

He always thinks that each job he gets will be his last. "I am never afraid to ask a producer who is making a movie if he has got anything for me. You can't sit back and watch for the phone to ring."

And he doesn't. He has written a film script, has tried his hand at directing, which he would like to continue with, and he also wants to be the first small person to present a national TV show.

But for now, he is taking a year off pantomime and looking forward to having a "magical" family Christmas at home with his wife and his five-year-old daughter Annabelle.

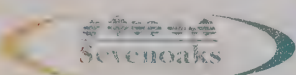
He has been so busy that I had to interview him on the way home to Peterborough after a hard day's rehearsal in Buckinghamshire. Despite that, he was easy to talk to – friendly and outgoing. He is obviously totally at ease with who he is.

"I have got no worries about being small. I would be small if I was to live my life again. People pierce their ears and dye their hair to stand out but I don't have to do anything different. If I wasn't small, I would probably dye my hair red."

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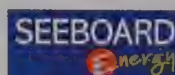


Bradford & Bingley

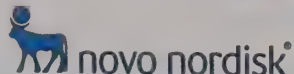


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On the ball: Jack Pegram (left) practises his skills before flying to Japan as part of the four-person English under-16 electric wheelchair football team in November. The ten-day trip was organised by the spinal injury charity ASPIRE. www.aspire.org.uk

Athletes face ban

Athletes with learning disabilities have been banned from world championship events until their ruling bodies agree new eligibility criteria.

If new rules are not agreed in time, they will also be barred from competing in the 2004 Paralympics in Athens.

The decision taken by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) follows cheating in the Sydney 2000 Paralympics, where non-disabled

athletes competed in events for learning disabled athletes.

The IPC has said the new criteria must make it more difficult for athletes to abuse the system.

The International Sports Federation for Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities (INAS-FID) is now working on its own eligibility system, which will be announced this month.

An IPC spokeswoman said: "INAS-FID is working on a new system to make sure there

can't be any cheating. We won't be taking any decisions on inclusion (in the Paralympics) until the INAS-FID makes a suggestion about eligibility."

The IPC decision means learning disabled athletes will not be able to compete in the swimming world championships in Argentina this month and will probably miss the Nordic skiing world championships in Germany in February.

Football and cricket in World Cup clashes

England's blind cricket and football teams are to compete in World Cup tournaments this month.

The cricket squad is heading for India, while the B1 football team will compete in Brazil.

The B1 Cricket World Cup takes place 3-14 December, and the B1 Football World Cup is between 29 November and 8 December.

Tim Guttridge, a member of the cricket team and international cricket secretary for British Blind Sport, said: "We have a really good squad this year and my aim would be to reach the semis."

Stadium scores

Football fans have welcomed plans to provide state-of-the-art access for people with disabilities at the new £750m Wembley Stadium, but have expressed concern about parking facilities.

The new national football stadium will include 400 wheelchair positions on platforms with unrestricted viewing, wider seats for people with mobility difficulties, and improved sound.

There will also be lift access to different levels, and accessible food counters and toilets.

Alan Milner, chair of the National Association of Disabled Supporters (NADS), said: "As a stadium it will be

unsurpassable in terms of an access point of view and in terms of creature comforts."

But he said he was worried about parking facilities. "That will be a big barrier to disabled people. They are working on the premise that people will use public transport."

A Football Association spokesman said the plans included 250 parking spaces for holders of blue badges.

One of the lead architects, Ben Vickery, said disabled supporters were involved in early discussions about the stadium and were likely to be brought in again to discuss the details now construction is under way.

Sailors are in

Britain's disabled sailing team has qualified for the 2004 Paralympics after coming second in the 2002 Disabled World Sailing Championships in the Netherlands.

The British team lost to Germany by one point but beat the Canadian and Australian teams.

They needed a top-seven finish to secure a Paralympic place, but second position should mean that team members Ed Suckling from London,

Andrew Cassell from the Isle of Wight and Brian Harding from Hampshire have a high chance of being selected to represent Britain.

Cassell, skipper of the 23-foot, fixed-keel Sonar, said: "We beat Australia, who won the gold medal in Sydney, and feel we are back on form."

The crew plans to go to Miami next summer for a pre-Paralympic regatta.

Britain won gold in the 1996 Paralympics.

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ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

Trolltech gives 'rip off' response

Chris Toulson claimed that Golf Trolls costing £125 were being converted to Wheelchair Trolls at £399 by adding "£10 of metalwork" (DN, November).

The website he accessed was not the Trolltech site and we have not supplied this company for over two years.

The recommended retail price of the Golf Troll is £199. The Wheelchair Troll is £499.

So why the difference?

Firstly, the Golf Troll is designed to move a load of 30 kilos, whereas the Wheelchair Troll is designed to push three times that. Even if you got the Golf Troll to move a wheelchair on the flat (it will not push it uphill), its gearbox would strip on contact with the first kerb, or the speed control electronics would burn out.

The Wheelchair Troll has a much larger motor, electronics

and a gearbox inside. Add to that regenerative braking, dead man's handles, a battery condition meter, wheelchair fixing clamps and lifting mechanism, none of which are required on the Golf Troll, and you can see where the price comes from.

DH Jackson
Chairman
Trolltech
Godstone, Surrey

Tories 'lack of thought'

David Green's promise to abolish local education authority appeals panels (DN, November) demonstrates the "lack of thought" behind the Tories' bandwagon jumping, and confirms Tory party chairperson Teresa May's description of her party as the "naughty party".

It is an attempt to strike a blow in front of the Tory party. Mr Green has introduced a policy that hits

children with learning disabilities, especially autism, and flies in the face of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Let's hope that the next time the Tories demonstrate their "caring" credentials, they consult with the experts to see how their policies would affect people in the real world.

Cllr Paul Holmes MP
Liberal Democrat Disability Spokesperson
House of Commons, SW1

Difficult gift

The article about Luke Jackson (DN, November) was one of the best articles on autism that I've ever read.

I am a 13-year-old with Asperger syndrome (AS) and I feel that Luke has done a lot for kids and teenagers like me by writing his book. It really tells young people with AS that "Different can also be cool" and that they are not a freak or have an illness, but as Luke, me and others think, a gift that can be difficult to deal with at times.

Callum Harrison
Dagenham, Essex

Duplicate badges

"It would jolly helpful," I said to Buckinghamshire County Council, "if I could have a duplicate blue badge for my son, Warwick". I explained there were many occasions when I parked and took him somewhere and his carer (in another car) collected him later, so we need a card for each car. "No way", they said.

The Department of Transport said there were already 2.3 million badges and it would increase scope for abuse. I don't get this.
Trevor Kent, email

One into one won't go

My wife is in an NHS wheelchair, model CS4, and we recently looked at the Ford Fusion (DN, November) as a Motability vehicle. Alas, her wheelchair would not sit in the boot and allow the lid to close. What wheelchair allows two to be "easily accommodated" in the boot space?
Stanley Nevill, email

'I cannot keep the house warm enough'



I've tried getting a response to my concerns about the winter fuel payment (wfp) from the Department of Work and Pensions, but have had no success – maybe you would be able to achieve more.

The "government spokesperson" keeps saying that the government has no plans to extend wfp to severely disabled people, since help is already available through Disability Living Allowance (DLA). I would like to raise several points about this, but have been fobbed off by the DWP (then DSS) so many times that I know it is not worth contacting them. Perhaps you will have more luck.

1. Needing extra heating is not part of the eligibility criteria for DLA – it does not affect either the award of the benefit or the level of benefit. If the government insists that it does, then this should be included in the claim procedure.

2. DLA (mobility component) is awarded because someone needs help with costs of mobility outside the home (it is not payable if you cannot leave the house), so this cannot include an amount for heating.

3. DLA (care component) is awarded if someone needs substantial help with personal care and, for the level of care required, it does not remotely cover the cost of providing care (eg 2 hours care per day at £5 per hour = £70 a week; DLA (care) = £37.65 a week). Now that social services are allowed to take DLA into account, the argument that people do not use their DLA to pay for care is no longer valid – if it ever was. So this benefit cannot include an amount for heating.

4. If they continue this argument, then they are also saying that elderly people in receipt of Attendance Allowance are also receiving help towards heating costs, and therefore their situation is no different to people under 60 years who receive DLA. In this case, either the government is discriminating against disabled people under 60, or they should take the wfp away from elderly people who receive AA. (Imagine the uproar that would cause!)

My pain levels are massively increased, and my mobility greatly reduced, during cold weather because I cannot keep the house warm enough. I live in a modern bungalow, with all the insulation, draught proofing, double glazing, etc, but because of my limited mobility and poor circulation I have major problems in keeping warm – like many other people around the country. I would simply like to be able to keep my living room and bedroom warm enough so that I don't suffer so badly during cold weather, without building huge debts – is that too much to ask? Apparently for this government, it is.

I would be grateful if you could present these points to someone who might be able to answer them – or to someone who might be able to take them further, such as Lord Ashley, Lord Morris or Roger Berry MP.

Tricia Higgins, e-mail

Your letter covers the argument for extending winter fuel payments to severely disabled people so thoroughly that we have run it in full on this page. I handed your e-mail to Andrew Smith, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 1 November. Roger Berry MP received a copy and raised the issue with Minister for Disabled People Maria Eagle at a Parliamentary All Party Disability Group meeting on 6 November (see page 6). I have not had a response from Andrew Smith – Editor

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PC pulse

by Dan Batten

Silly sausage

On an October edition of Radio 2's religious *Good Morning Sunday* programme, presenter and comedian Don Maclean informed listeners that the upcoming week was both British Sausage Week and Dyslexia Week. The two clashing meant it would be "mangers and bash for everyone", according to Maclean.



Doesn't he realise this sort of "joke" doesn't cut the mustard?

In-ape-propriate behaviour

The University of St Andrews' debating society has been lambasted for planning a public debate entitled "This house would rather support a chimpanzee than a disabled child", based on a quote from the controversial philosopher Peter Singer. The debate, publicised with posters, drew complaints and was cancelled. Wouldn't chimps and disabled people have more intelligence than to be caught up with such idiots?

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Christmas is looming, but don't panic – Dan Batten, Nuala Calvi and Anne Davies have present ideas for everyone

Easy giving

the ten best... hats and gloves

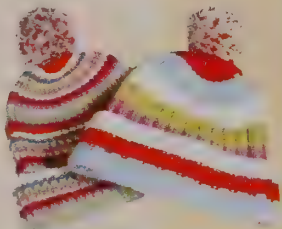


WOMEN:

- Chocolate brown suede gloves with silk lining (left), £22.99, Next
- Cashmere-lined, wipe-clean leather gloves, £35, Marks & Spencer
- Water-repellent, machine-washable fleece gloves, £10, Marks & Spencer
- Multicoloured crochet pull-on hat, £14.99, Accessorize
- Stripey woolly bobble hat (below), £14.99, Accessorize

MEN:

- Stone flecked knitted gloves with fleece lining, £7.99, Next
- Italian black suede gloves, £40, House of Fraser, Linear Collection
- Camel faux fur deerstalker with mock leather ties, £14.99, Next
- Brown and stone knitted wool hats (two pack), £12.99, Next
- Ski beanie in red or blue, £12, Marks & Spencer



antique chic

Black is back for party dresses, so make the most of this year's vintage and antique-inspired accessories. Rambling roses decorate elegant hair slides (£5.99) and antique bell earrings (£9.99) are studded with pink stones at Accessorize, while this Romany-style beaded necklace (£14.99, Next) feels truly bohemian. For a touch of old-fashioned glamour, go for a diamanté frame evening bag with metal shoulder chain (£20) or luxurious gold lace shawl with flowing tassels (£21), both from Marks & Spencer.



Ex-Vogue model Patience Bradley has designed the first ever range of evening wear especially for women who use wheelchairs. Pieces include ball gowns with detachable capes, and trousers with ankle clips for standing. Bradley is holding a fashion show in Temple Patrick, Northern Ireland, on 1 December and hopes to be taking orders in the near future. For more information, tel: 07966 416553.

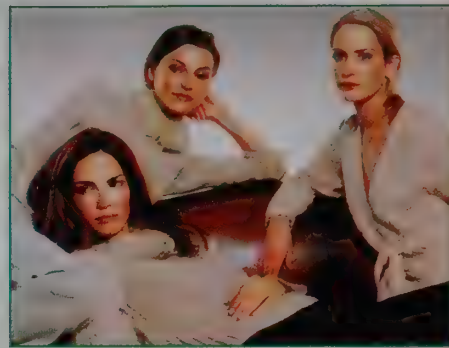
For more information about the clothes featured on this page, visit the websites at www.accessorize.co.uk, www.debenhams.com, www.houseoffraser.co.uk, www.marksandspencer.com and www.next.co.uk

knitted-out

Knitwear is huge this season – the bigger and chunkier the better. Marks & Spencer leads the way with its new range of women's woollens, including this machine-washable ribbed jumper (£32), cable wrap cardigan (£39) and fur collar cardigan (£39).

Textures can be mixed and matched with a speckled brown tweed roll-neck sweater (£29.99) and neutral embroidered fake fur trim jacket (£49.99), both in pure lambswool.

House of Fraser's "new rustic" collection for men features moleskin trousers, argyle sweaters and roll-neck rib twists sweaters in various colours from £35.



toasty tots

Kids love to keep up with the fashions, but if your budget can't keep up with the kids, go for a stone fur trim coat from Debenhams to keep them warm this winter (£40-£45, girls 3-7). The chunky buttons are easy to do up and the hood is detachable. Girls can also follow this season's love affair with sheepskin at Debenhams, with one of the gorgeous cream coats from J Junior by Jasper Conran (£45-£50).

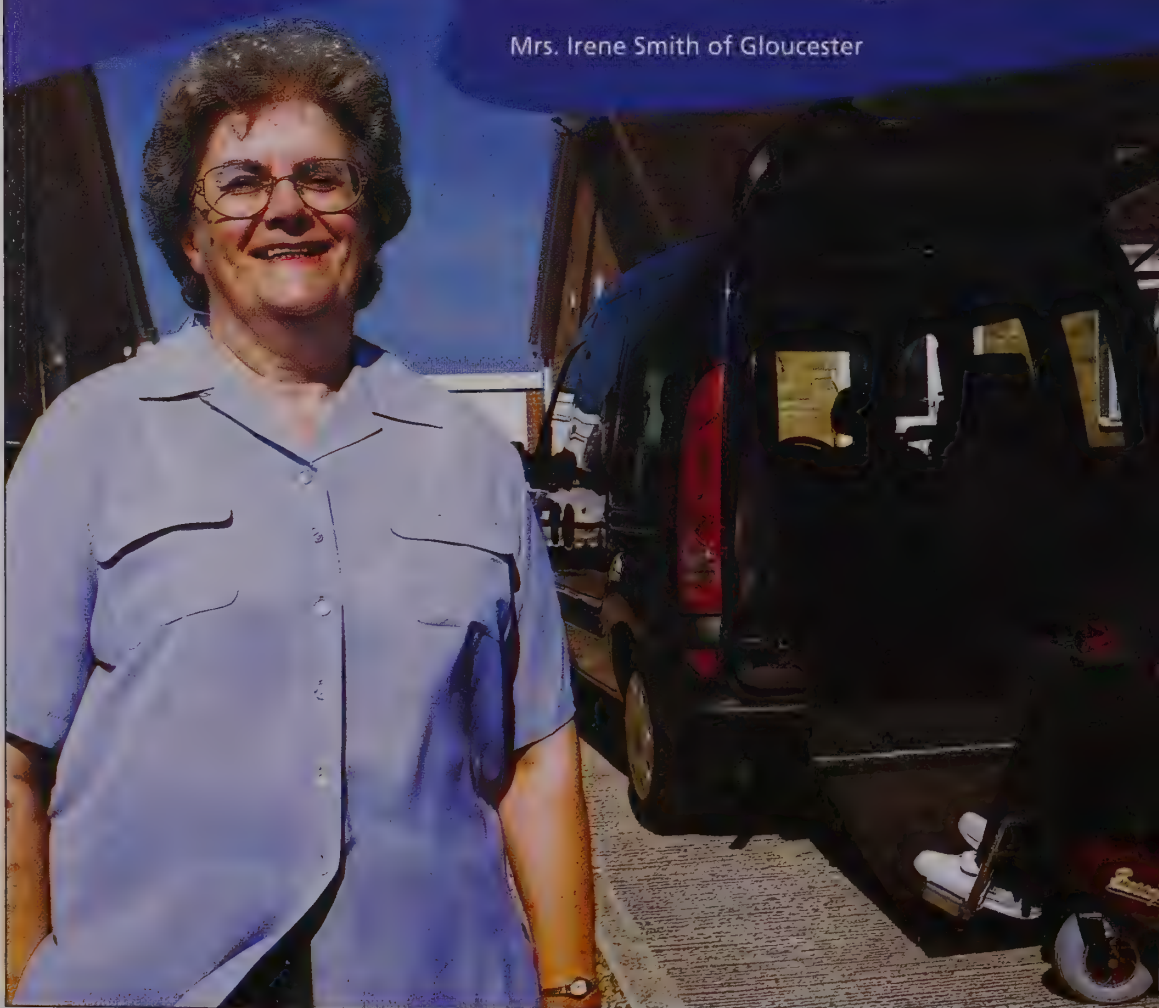
Boys will love looking mean and moody in the new David Beckham range at Marks & Spencer. The Beckham coat costs £35-£40, while other numbers include Beckham picture pyjamas (£19) and a grey dressing gown with red Beckham motif (£28) – perfect for posing. Ages 4-16.

suave in suede

Fawn suede-look jacket with fleece lining (left), £85, from Marks & Spencer

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Mrs. Irene Smith of Gloucester





let there be light

Want to make your house look Christmassy or find a gift for house-proud friends? Marks & Spencer has a pretty Manor House hurricane lamp in etched glass (left), which would look super on a festive table (£20), tel: 020 7268 1234, www.marksandspencer.com, while the latest Cole and Mason Savvy Grip pepper and salt balls (all grip, no slip) look good and are practical (£11.99 each), tel: 01252 522322, www.coleandmason.co.uk

Set the festive mood with a light therapy, mood-enhancing lamp (right). Made by Carmen, the lamp has four colours to choose from or put it on "swish setting" for relaxing colour changes (£24.99), tel: 0845 658 9700.



why pay more?

If you hate paying high-street prices for DVDs, music and games, then play.com is for you. They have all the latest releases at significantly reduced prices and, if you have a DVD player that takes American discs, you can order Hollywood blockbusters before they reach the UK. The latest CDs start at £8.99, and there are big discounts on video games. What's more, there are no delivery charges. Tel: 0845 800 1020, www.play.com



no more wire hangers!

For children, there's the Oxfam jungle coathanger, which comes with a bag of fair-trade, chocolate raisins. Available for £6.99 at 238 Oxfam stores in the UK. Tel: 0845 300311, www.oxfam.org.uk/shops/find

tough teddy

If you want to get young ones a traditional toy with a modern twist, try a teddy bear from the Blue Foot Bear Company. They have a range of bears in a variety of costumes, including a rebel bear in a leather jacket (right). You can send a get well bear to a poorly pal and even propose marriage via a bear. From £25.99, tel: 0870 9090 007, www.bluefootbear.co.uk



chocolates & sweets



Lindt has a festive range, including chocolate Santas in three sizes (from £1.99) and a pack of five miniature Santas. And for adults, there's the exclusive liqueur range, including Remy Martin champagne cognac inside a dark chocolate shell (£7.99)

Another treat for grown-ups is Guylian's chocolate pralines in a stylish, shaped box of seashells (£6.99) (left). They also have giftboxes for £5.99 and smaller boxes at £2.99.

Stores like Waitrose, Aldi and Sainsbury's have their own brand of Belgian chocolates and truffles in a variety of prices and packaging.



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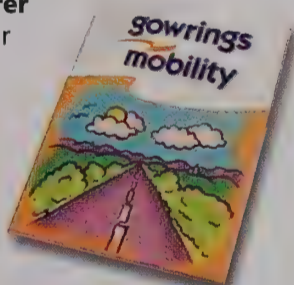
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have a ball

For something that will keep you all amused long after Christmas, try the Tip Top ping pong and pool table from Memorise This. Be warned, though: your house will suddenly become very popular with this item in place. £359, tel: 0870 738 8000, website: www.memorisetthis.com



teas and biscuits

Good teas are always welcome. Jacksons of Piccadilly's latest one, for the National Gardens Scheme's 75th anniversary, is the Garden Blend caddy. It's a classic blend and deliciously refreshing. (£3.99, 10p of which goes to the scheme). There are also 250g Victorian caddies (£4.65) or mini caddies at £1.99 each.

Whittard's Cool Yule selection includes sets of hand-painted ceramics, including a collection of two mugs, tea and shortbread. There are also Cool Yule tea bags and Hangover fruit tea bags for £2.50. Stockists: 0800 0154 394, www.whittard.com

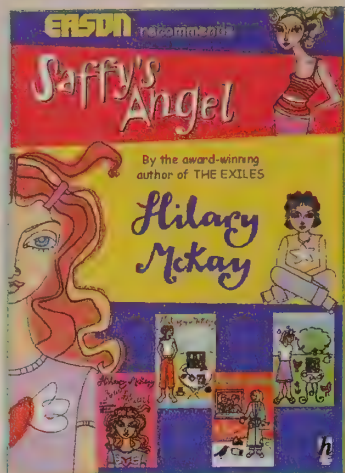


Season's readings

If you dread the thought of spending time with the relatives this Christmas, a good book is a sure way to divert their attention.

Have you lost the plot with this year's Christmas shopping? The easy solution is to buy books – there's something for everyone, and best of all, you can buy all your presents on the web if you like.

Sports enthusiasts will love *Raising the Bar: New Horizons in Disability Sport* by Artemis AW Joukowsky and Larry Rothstein, with a preface by Christopher Reeve (Umbrage Editions, £28). With quotes and stunning images of athletes from around the world, the book gives a history of international disability sport from the 1948 international games to the Paralympics in 1996. Mandeville in 1952



anything from loading the washing machine and stripping the beds to dressing their owner and paying for shopping.

Fiction fans can try *Shadow of the Eagle* by Augustine Nash (Bloozoo Publishing, £8.99) – it took the 65-year-old author, who now has arthritis and a twisted spine after years of lifting patients as a nurse, 12 years to get published. *Shadow of the Eagle*, which was put forward for the Man Booker Prize by its publisher, is a story of love, jealousy and tragedy inspired by events that happened to the Nez Perce Indians of North America in the 19th century. A book to curl up with on a dark Christmas evening!

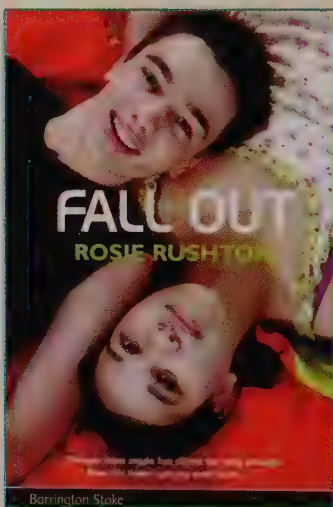
For friends or relatives who prefer books on tape, there's a huge range. Try Nick Hornby's *How to be Good* (BBC Word for Word, £25.99), David Starkey's *Elizabeth* (BBC Word for Word, £35.99), Sue Townsend's *Number Ten* (Penguin Audiobooks, £8.99) or *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* by Rebecca Wells (Pan Macmillan, £8.99).

Children with a low reading

age will love Barrington Stoke's books for "reluctant, dyslexic, disenchanted and under-confident readers". The company has a good range of gripping novels with trendy covers for teenagers – great gifts they won't be ashamed to be caught reading. Try *Baby Baby* by Vivian French, about the unlikely meeting of Pinkie with her bright pink hair and biker boots and April in her pretty clothes and snow-white trainers (£4.50); *Cold Heart of Summer* by Alan Gibbons, a chilling ghost story (£4.50); *Stalker* by Anthony Masters, in which Sarah finds herself in an uncertain world where no one can be trusted (£4.50); or *Fall Out* by Rosie Rushton, in which Jemma gets a text message that threatens to ruin her life and makes her question the loyalty of new friends (£4.50). There are also book and tape ranges for younger readers.

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

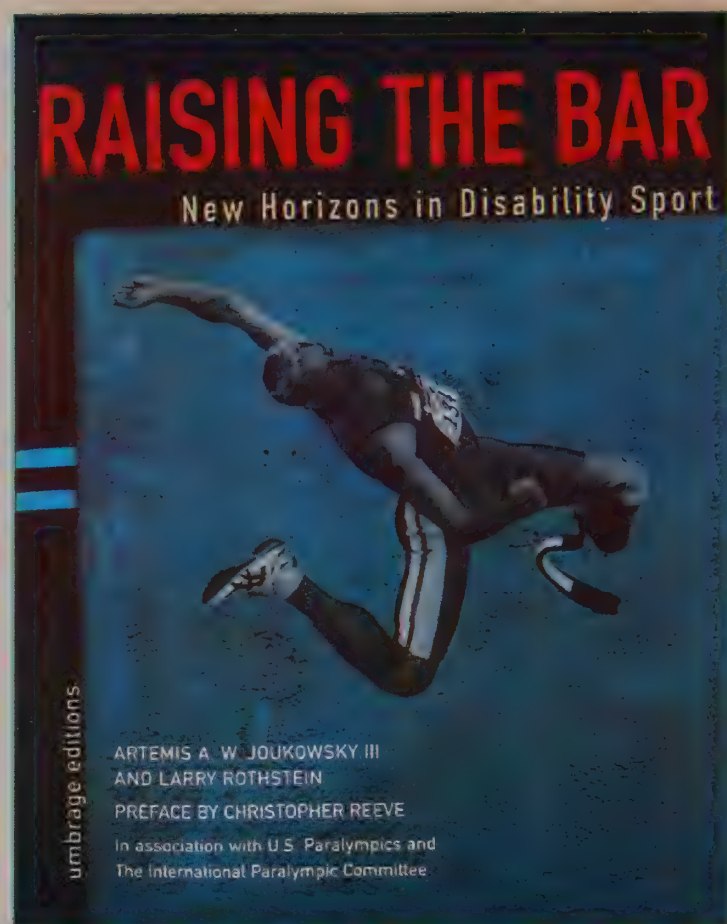
The *Mum Trap* by Ruth Symes (Andersen Press, £3.99), suitable for a reading age of over eight, is the story of Anna and her sister Gemma, a



wheelchair user, who use a lonely hearts column to try to find a new partner for their widowed father.

Saffy's Angel by Hilary McKay (Hodder Children's Books, £5.99) is a groovy-looking book for children with a reading age of over nine. Saffron teams up with her neighbour, a wheelchair user, to delve into the past of her highly eccentric family.

So don't get stressed about present buying this year – nip down to your local bookshop or log on to the internet and you'll have Christmas wrapped up in no time at all.



Books can be ordered online at www.waterstones.co.uk
BBC shop: www.bbcshop.com



to the Paralympics as we know them today. A must for sports relatives and friends.

Need a gift for an animal lover? Let them *Partners for Life: True Stories of Canine Companions* by Jane Bidder (Orion, £9.99). It's a collection of stories about the assistance dogs provided by charity Canine Partners, dogs that can help with

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Festive feasts

Anne Davies seeks out easy-to-serve traditional treats – and some that will give your meal an unusual twist



camembert bake (£2.49 each).

Traditional rich fruit puddings, including ones for special diets, are widely available. A frozen dessert is a good alternative and is less rich. Try Sainsbury's apricot and amaretto trifle (£7.99). Marks & Spencer has a connoisseur chocolate praline pudding, which is gluten and wheat-free (£14.99), and a sponge base with glazed fruit topping (£16.99). Tesco is offering a



Sainsbury's (above), ASDA, Aldi and other supermarkets, and Hallmark has 12 for £5.99 (with a guarantee that each one bangs or your money back!).

Try having tea by candlelight. Iced fruit cakes are plentiful, so here are some alternatives. Oxfam has an organic, fruit-laden cake topped with brazil and cashew nuts. Sainsbury's has an iced sponge in the shape of a snowman (centre) and Marks & Spencer is offering a robin gift cake (£4.99) (left).

Panettone is available from all good supermarkets. Other teatime treats include warm scones with jam – try Duchy Originals conserves (£2.45).

Happy Christmas!



alexander in its Finest range (£7.99), and cranberry, redcurrant and orange on a citrus mousse (two for £2.49). Finish off your meal with a selection of cheeses.

There are plenty of crackers to choose from, including savoury, wheat-free biscuits from Sainsbury's Free-from range, which are crunchy and full of flavour.

End the meal with crackers of the "pulling" variety. There are good-value boxes at



What might people in other countries be eating over Christmas? In the south of France they will eat duck, and there is always a table with 13 different fruits, cakes and marzipan to nibble. In Germany stollen and lebkuchen (spice cakes) are served at coffee time and Italians finish off their festive meal with panettone (sweet, brioche-style bread). Many of these foods are

available in UK supermarkets, so do try them.

Here, a festive meal might start with smoked salmon. Prices vary, but Sainsbury's has a selection pack for £10 (above); Aldi's 200g for £1.99 is very good value; and Marks & Spencer has four slices for £3.99. If you want something different, try Tesco's Finest creamy prawn and crab mousse (£3.49).

For main course, turkey is the most popular and there is a wide choice and price range. A "turkey crown" is ideal for a small family. Aldi's crown with cranberry, orange and herb stuffing is £8.99 for 2.5kg. Tesco has stuffed bronze turkey

breast en crouete for £18.99, while Marks & Spencer's deboned and stuffed whole turkey (£32) will go a long way and is easy to carve.

For something different, try roast partridge (allow one per person) or prepared pheasant breasts (above). Both are low in fat and are available in good supermarkets.

Tesco has an easy-to-carve duck joint with Christmas fruit stuffing (£10).

For vegetarians, try Marks & Spencer's roast pepper, courgette and tomato tart with coriander and lime (£12) (left) or Sainsbury's Christmas nut loaf or potato, leek and



✓ Tesco has a range of wines in its "unwind" series, all priced at £4.99.

✓ Aldi's German Beerenauslese dessert wine sells at £2.99.

✓ ASDA carries a wide selection of reds and whites. For red, try its South African Graham Beck Shiraz (£6.92) or its Chateau du Prince Noir Bordeaux (£4.28). For whites, there's Riesling Kabinett at £3.92.

✓ For parties, try Merry-down vintage ciders for a change, and be sure you have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks on hand.



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in a spin

Allan Sutherland has ideas for all those cycling fans

If you feel extravagant and know a cycling enthusiast, try the Kickbike (right) from Vroom Scooters. They can be used for recuperation from injuries because the kicking/scooting action has a very low impact on your legs. The lack of a fixed riding position distributes the work amongst many muscle groups without strain on any particular sets of joints and without weight resting on any particular part of the body. For keeping muscle tone, maintaining mobility and having fun, Kickbikes are a more flexible means of transport than bicycles. Prices start at £199. www.vroomscooters.co.uk, tel: 07817 192652 (accepts text messages).



punctures no problem!

For a cheaper cycling gift, try Specialized's handy EMT Comp tool (left), which features a tyre lever, chain tool, spoke wrenches, T2s Torx for disc brakes and a bottle/can opener. It also has a set of Allen keys, plus flat head and Philips screwdrivers. Also available in a lighter Sport version. The Comp is £19.99 and the Sport £9.99. For stockists, tel: 01372 840800, www.specialized.com

festive events

● A Victorian Christmas at Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner, London W1, 7-8 December, will definitely get you in the yuletide mood.

Activities include carol singing, tours for children and talks on Victorian traditions. Some are BSL interpreted. Free entry. Tel: 020 7499 5676.

● The Chicken Shed Theatre Company's magical Christmas musical is *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, 4 December-18 January, at its theatre in Chase Side, London N14. Tickets start at £9. For more details, tel: 020 8292 9222, minicom: 020 8350 0676.

gadget gifts

Sue Heaton finds equipment that friends and relatives will really thank you for

As an occupational therapist, I'm in a good position to suggest gadgets and gizmos for Christmas presents.

But, personally, I fancy a voucher for a complementary therapy or beauty session – or how about the CD *Music for Relaxation* from New World Music, for £10.95. Tel: 01986 781682, www.newworldmusic.com



not feeling so great. The company's best sellers are the Tartan Multi Purpose Wheat Bag with lavender at £10 or one with a removable cover for £12.50. Tel: 01924 849650, www.thenaturalwheatbag.co.uk

Anything Left-Handed has practical gifts including fountain pens for adults and children (from £10.95), coloured leather pocket organisers (£29.95), a manicure set (above, £14.95) and a waiter's corkscrew (£6.95) – real treats if you struggle to find left-handed gift. Tel: 020 8770 3722, www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk



The Natural Wheat Bag

Company makes nice gifts for anyone with aches and pains – or anyone that likes a bit of comfort, for that matter. How about Hug Me Better Golden Bear (above)? He can be bought for £15 or gift wrapped with a lavender oil atomiser or eucalyptus and citrus decongestant spray for £20. The bag in his tummy can heat up to provide soothing warmth when you're

I like the hippo and tortoise play mats from Promedics. These are fun-shaped Dycem mats that provide an effective non-slip surface for mealtimes, writing or play (£10.95). Promedics also does beverage holders that clip on to wheelchairs and hold glasses, cans or bottles. From £5.50 tel: 01254 619000.

Finally, anyone who likes cooking but finds gripping difficult will love the Swedish Fix It (left) from

Homecraft Ability One.

It allows you to chop, slice, grate, peel, mix, open and cut with one hand – a whole

kitchen-in-one gadget. £51.02. tel: 01623 721000.



top gear

Looking for gifts for car owners? Halfords is offering novelty car cleaning kits and accessories, including a Simpsons car care kit gift tin containing air freshener, window sticker, polishing cloth, tax disc holder and sponge (£4.99), www.halfords.com

Clear your conscience by planting a tree with the help of the RAC. Each tree costs £7 plus £1 for a greetings card if you want to plant the tree as a gift. Tel: 0870 321 4179, www.rac.co.uk/plant_a_tree

The RAC is also offering an essential motoring kit, including first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, boot holdall, torch and atlas. £38.99, www.rac.co.uk



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Choice for change

Reconstructive surgery can improve the quality of life for many people, but as Nuala Calvi found out, it's only part of the process

Around 400,000 people in the UK have disfigurements to their face or bodies resulting from accidents, illness, cancer treatment, conditions present at birth or other causes.

Although surgical treatments can "correct" some types of disfigurement, the question of which procedures can be regarded as corrective surgery, and which as purely aesthetic, "cosmetic" surgery, remains very difficult to answer.

But surgery can rarely make a disfigurement disappear completely, so tackling the psychological and social aspects of disfigurement is crucial.

Changing Faces was set up to provide the emotional support and advice that has traditionally been neglected in the treatment of people with disfigurements.

According to the charity, communication skills, assertiveness and methods of dealing with discriminatory attitudes should accompany any surgical intervention.

And more important than changing the disfigurement

itself is changing the social attitudes that define it as a disability. Changing Faces successfully campaigned to have disfigurement recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act as part of its work to promote a culture of acceptance and equal opportunities.

But there are those who strongly believe in the central role surgery plays in making people feel more socially accepted.

"If you are very self conscious about a particular aspect of your looks – to the point you can't go out of the house – then the evidence is that having a successful operation can improve you psychologically," says Harley Street plastic surgeon and author of *Plastic Fantastic*, Dai Davies.

"There are downsides to surgery, but if your disfigurement causes you that much distress you can't be talked out of it or given pills for it – the only way is to change the abnormality."

Ultimately, as the following case studies show, it is up to the individual to decide how far he or she wants to go with surgery.

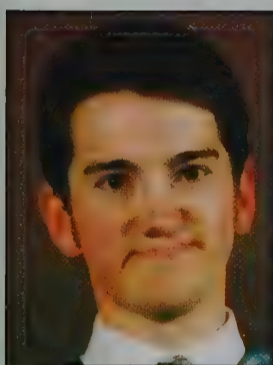


A recent collaboration between portrait painter Mark Gilbert and Dr Ian Hutchinson resulted in a national touring exhibition. The project is part of Saving Faces, the Facial Surgery Research Foundation. It ensured that potential sitters gave clear and informed consent to being painted and did not feel any coercion to participate. Pictured above is Roland S (with radiotherapy mask).

The exhibition travels to The Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, 18 January to 15 March 2003.

Saving Faces, tel: 020 7601 7582, fax: 020 7601 7305, www.savingfaces.co.uk

Changing Faces, tel: 020 7706, 4232, fax: 020 7706 4234, www.changingfaces.co.uk



David Wheeler was born with a cleft lip and palette and had ten operations during his childhood and teens to improve his speech and reshape his palette. He is now 35 and works as a piano teacher in Warrington.

"I was at university when I had the last round of surgery and I thought it was going to make my speech better, but I later found out it was done mainly for cosmetic reasons.

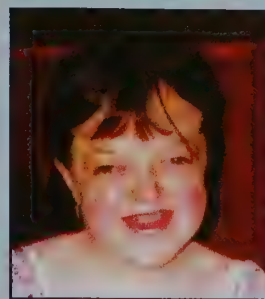
"It really got me down and I couldn't eat for three weeks because my jaw was wired together. Then I had bone grafts which were rejected. When the consultant wanted to do more surgery, I'd just had enough.

"The procedure was going to involve wearing scaffolding around my head for six weeks and he said I needed it if I wanted to work in science because I didn't "look right". It was horrifying because I'd spent 20 years getting used to how I looked, and now this man, who I believed because he was my consultant, was saying I looked wrong.

"The procedure would make my face look less flat, but there was quite a risk of my speech becoming worse, so I said no. I've never regretted not having more surgery. I still have a small hole in my hard palette which can occasionally be annoying when little bits of food get stuck in it, but I'm used to it. Now I'm in my thirties, I find people either accept me or they don't.

"My problem with surgery is it often neglects confidence-building and emotional support. It's so important to get counselling to find out what your expectations are.

"If you're 18 and think an operation is going to make you everything you're not, it won't. After all, people who aren't disfigured have surgery because it's an excuse for something."



Abby Worth, 13, has craniofacial syndrome and had major surgery as a young child to relieve pressure on her brain caused by premature fusing of her skull plates. Abby will soon have the option of further surgery to change the shape of her face for cosmetic reasons.

"I haven't started worrying about the surgery yet because it's still a few years off – they can't do it until you stop growing. I know what it's supposed to do – give me cheekbones and a longer nose – but exactly how hasn't been explained to me.

"At the moment I'm happy with the way I look and I wouldn't have the surgery just to look better, but I want to be an actress and that business is based a lot on image. If I wasn't getting many jobs, I would think about it. I wouldn't be scared because I like hospitals.

"I sometimes worry about my looks, not really though. I used to get weird reactions from people on the street, but I don't anymore – or maybe I've just stopped noticing.

"Changing Faces made a big difference because I met people with the same condition and learned comebacks for when someone is rude. The best one has to be: 'I know I'm gorgeous, but you don't have to stare at me all the time!'

"I'm confident because that's my personality, but some people might feel they'd fit in more if they changed how they look. One of the good points about having surgery is it does give you more confidence."



James Partridge was involved in a car accident at the age of 18 which left him with 40 per cent burns on his face and body. His experiences led him to set up the charity Changing Faces in 1992.

"When you first become disfigured, you go through a mourning process – you grieve the loss of looks. Knowing what the reconstructive surgery is giving you makes you pleased but

then you constantly feel frustrated at the same time that it is all you will get back.

"I spent five years having over fifty operations until I decided I'd achieved an aesthetically acceptable face.

"The surgery did all sorts of things – it created new eyelids, a new nose and a completely new chin with skin taken from my back. I also had reconstructive surgery on my ears.

"I learnt an awful lot of lessons during that process, but the biggest realisation was that walking down the street, getting work or starting a relationship was going to be a lot more difficult than any number of operations.

"I'm still a real patchwork quilt of scars and grafts, but the great news is 25 years later, I'm a happy-go-lucky character.

"At the time, I found the support needed to enable me to rehabilitate psychologically and socially was non-existent. The job fell on my family and friends and I just learned by trial and error.

"I don't believe that need ever happen to anyone else again. Although you feel extremely isolated and alone at times, it's clear from the thousands of people out there living with a disfigurement that you can face life with confidence.

"The key is ensuring that people with disfigurements learn the skills to manage the negative reactions of other people, whether they be curiosity, rejection, revulsion, evasion or discrimination. Thankfully, the programmes we started at Changing Faces to do just that are now becoming available on the NHS.

"I learnt to use eye contact with people and wear my disfigurement with confidence. In the end, it wasn't about the face on its own but the way I wore it."



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TV

As predicted, after all the excitement over the much-publicised *What's Your Problem?* disability series, we are now back to the three wheelchair basketball players popping up briefly in between BBC programmes. Current sightings of disabled people, let alone presenters, are once again thin on the ground.

Having said that, Mat Fraser does seem to review the papers regularly on *The Heaven and Earth Show* (BBC1). Why not have him (or another disabled presenter) on the other settee, asking the questions?

No prizes for guessing which channel gave us *Dwarves in Showbiz*. That's right, C5, or "Five" as it is now called. Earning a living from your physical peculiarity isn't everybody's cup of tea, but then if you've got it, flaunt it.

ITV1's new wartime crime drama *Foyle's War* is enjoyable in that let-it-all-wash-over-you-on-a-Sunday-night kind of way. Michael Kitchen is probably not the next Morse, but it's nice to see his disabled sidekick navigating thoughtfully through all the red herrings to find whodunnit.

The monstrous manager David Brent finally got his comeuppance in BBC2's *The Office*, but not before he'd made patronising disabled people into an Olympic demonstration sport on Children in Need day. You reap what you sow, David.

My mate Kim Tserkesie is apparently going down a storm as powerchair-using shopkeeper Polly Pocket in *Ballymore*, the new kids' show on CBeebies. Perhaps they'll give it a terrestrial airing and then we can all see it.

Five's *Plastic Surgery Ruined My Life* was the usual nightmare scenario of vanity triumphing over common sense. People went under knives wielded by butchers and plain greedy, unscrupulous men. But what did they expect? As the woman with the double F breasts said: "I've brought it on myself." Quite.

Jane Shepherd

Film

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets



Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets is darker than its predecessor, with Harry learning more about the forces that bind him to the evil Lord Voldemort, climaxing in an underground battle with his nemesis.

But make no mistake: this is huge fun – good gags, gripping action, inspired casting of strong characters and a satisfying resolution. Among its pleasures is that, unusually for film adaptations, it sticks impeccably close to the original novel. (And if you don't know what's in the original, just ask any passing ten-year-old.)

One thing I really like about this film is that it's such a good British movie. It uses the strengths of British actors, with a variety of regional accents, and is immensely strong for it. How pleasant to see American technical skills (Industrial Light and Magic, George Lucas's effects company) supporting a British cast, rather than the other way round.

Among the delights of the

film is the casting of Kenneth Branagh as Gilderoy Lockhart, an author who makes Jeffrey Archer look modest and self-effacing. Branagh plays Lockhart as a preening, campy thespian, totally in love with himself, and has tremendous fun doing so. The knockabout duel between Lockhart and the sinister Severus Snape (Alan Rickman) gains extra pleasure from the realisation that one is watching two giants of the British stage.

The special effects are, on

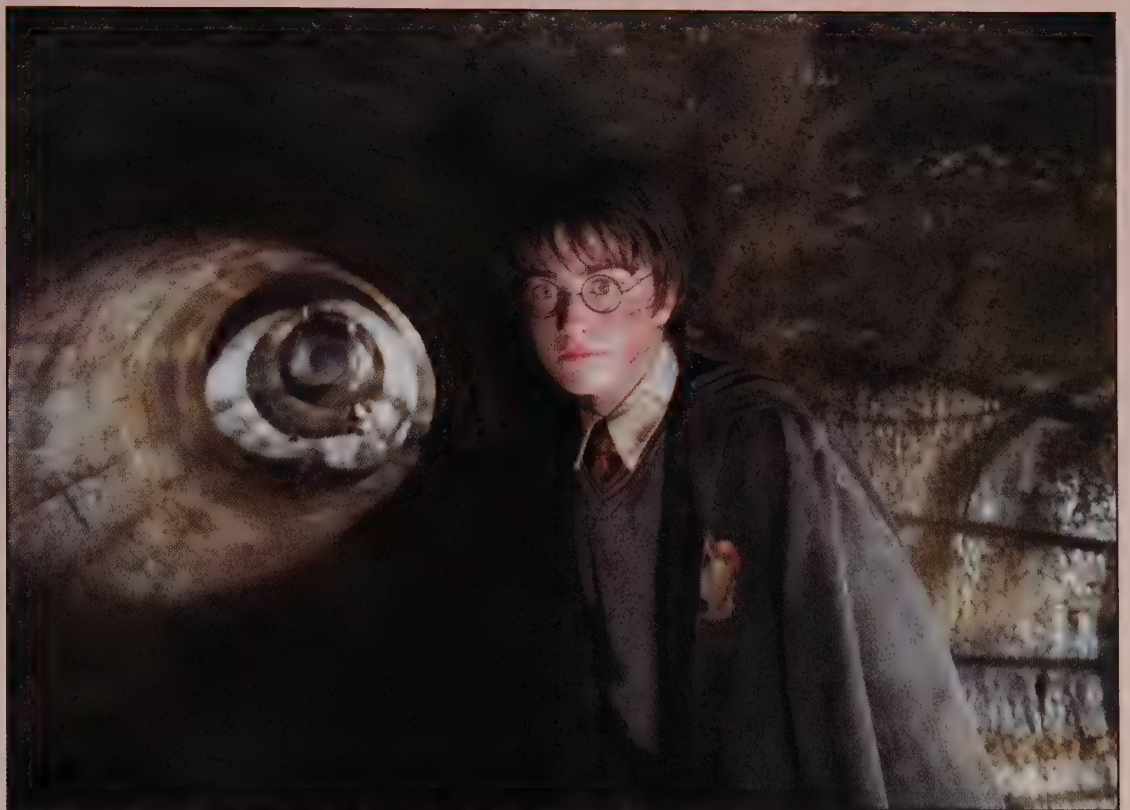
the whole, excellent (the big exception being Hermione's acquisition of a cat's head, which looks like something from a cheap production of *Dick Whittington*). Dobby the house-elf is computer-generated, but entirely faithful to JK Rowling's original description. And the Aragog sequence, where Harry and Ron are surrounded by giant spiders, is seriously creepy.

One of the staff, Professor Flitwick, is played by Warwick Davies, an actor with

restricted growth, though you'd be doing well to spot him here. (Flitwick does play a more significant role in a later story.) But that's not to say that the film has no disability relevance. A major theme of the movie proves to be that expressed by Dumbledore (Richard Harris in his last major role): "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

See profile, page 16.

Allan Sutherland



Coming up



The Hand of Time is an exhibition by two disabled artists, photographer Clifford Morris and poet Semba Jallow-Rutherford. The photographs (below) and poems portray five abandoned industrial sites, showing how nature moves quickly to reclaim land. 30 November - 12 January, Borough Museum and Art Gallery, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire. Parking and good disabled access. For more information, tel: 01782 619705.



CLIFFORD MORRIS



London's Chicken Shed Theatre Company is looking for two volunteers to extend its provision of audio-described performances. Contact Beverley Ward, tel: 020 8351 6161, e-mail: beverleyw@chickenshed.org.uk



Vital Arts is holding an exhibition of Steven Bloch's photography of Magpie Dance company, a group of dancers with learning disabilities, at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London EC1A, until 3 January. Contact Vital Arts, The Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel Road, London E1, tel: 020 7377 7127.



There will be a talk on the Versace exhibition for people with visual impairments at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London SW7 at 11am, 2 December. Free. To reserve a place, tel: 020 7942 2197, e-mail: bookings.office@vam.ac.uk



Shape, the UK's largest disability arts organisation, is launching Activate, a new training/employment initiative. Activate will train ten disabled artists in delivering

disability equality training using their arts skills. Contact Stevie Rice, tel: 020 7619 6165.



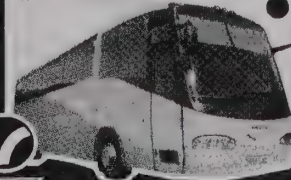
Coronation Street is looking for disabled background actors with professional training or experience. Send your CV and photo with a covering letter, stating access requirements, to Rachael Vennard, Coronation Street, Granada TV, Quay Street, Manchester M60 9EA.

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'A huge step to a happy life'

Anne Long's daughter never went out and rarely smiled – until they were introduced to a new respite scheme

My 31-year-old daughter Carol has epilepsy and learning difficulties and has never had one friend in all her life.

She was bullied right through her school years, even by some teachers. She would come home each day and go to

herself and put us in touch with social services. Steve arranged for her to go and do computer studies one day a week at the Glaxo Neurological Centre in Liverpool. Brian Simpson, the man who runs the scheme, is even going to give Carol some voluntary work – great. They'll

'I am so happy with it all; it brings tears to my eyes. It is amazing to see my daughter eat and talk for the first time in 31 years...I just can't tell you how it makes me feel'

her bedroom, even eating her meals there. When it was school holidays she would live in her room. She would never eat in front of anyone, not even her family. I have never known Carol to sing or hum – she didn't even smile very often.

Her life was like this until a couple of months ago, when a man called Steve Dale, project manager at Merseyside adult support services, came to talk to us.

Carol's doctors had realised she needed to be taken out of

try her out in the kitchens and see how she gets on. She may even start serving meals in a day centre for old people and, if she can manage that, it would be marvellous for her.

Steve also takes Carol and three others for confidence-building classes at the Glaxo Centre every Wednesday night. They go to a group where people talk about their lack of confidence and what they can do about it. So far Carol hasn't spoken out – I ask her if she has every time she comes home – but at least she is discovering



All change: the scheme has turned Carol and Anne's lives around

that she's not the only person in her situation.

Carol is also part of a new respite scheme which takes learning disabled people out and about. The scheme has about 60 places and it's aimed at adults with mild learning disabilities who are in need of a social life.

They have been out for

meals and Carol is now happy to eat with them. They are going to Blackpool, out for a Christmas meal and to a disco, and there are other outings in the pipeline. I want

Carol writes: I am quiet, camera shy. But now I look in cameras and I go out with my mum and dad. I go to Glaxo twice a week for confidence and computers. Steve takes me out twice a week – Tuesday is the pictures, bowling, going to pubs and for a meal. Wednesday is confidence classes and the pub. Since I have been out I have met a lot of people.

to get them involved in a few competitions – darts, ten-pin bowling, that sort of thing. It would be great fun for them and get Carol interacting even more.

All this has not only been brilliant for Carol – it's been great for me, too. The first night Carol went out, I just cried and didn't know what to do with myself. But now it gives me a bit of space. Even if I don't go out anywhere, it means I can do my own thing at home and I find that a great help.

I am so happy with it all; it brings tears to my eyes. It is amazing to see my daughter eat and talk for the first time in 31 years. She talks a lot now and when Wednesday comes she has a big smile on her face – her eyes light up. I just can't tell you how it makes me feel.

She has met quite a few new people and, although they chat, she still hasn't made any real friends. It's early days, though, and she has made a huge step towards living a happy life.

The respite scheme currently has a waiting list but, for more information, contact Diana Niccol at Granton Road Social Services Office, Liverpool L5 6QW, tel: 0151 263 3421.

The Glaxo Neurological Centre, tel: 0151 298 2999, <http://glaxocentre.merseyside.org>



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In the mood for food?

In the last of this series, Dan Batten helps you avoid the pitfalls of dining out

Even if you consider yourself hot stuff in the kitchen, it's always nice to enjoy a meal at a good restaurant. And with Christmas on the way, a good feast and a few drinks in a bar is the best way to get your friends together before you go your separate ways for the hols. In an ideal world, organising this should be easy. But if your wheelchair makes access awkward, or if you're taking your guide dog, finding a restaurant to enjoy your meal in comfort can be tough.

A safe bet is a recommendation from friends who share

won £3,000 in damages, still the highest amount won under part III of the DDA.

So treating disabled people unfavourably could cost businesses dear. "It is no longer acceptable for disabled people to be treated as second-class citizens. The law now says so and it will be enforced," said DRC chairman Bert Massie.

Another stage of part III of the DDA, introduced in October 1999, says that service providers must make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to use their services.

For Angela Edmonds, the only adjustment she needed this

'Since December 1996, it has been unlawful for service providers to refuse service, or offer inferior service, to someone for disability-related reasons'

the same tastes and are aware of your access needs. It might be good to have a talk with another disabled person with similar requirements. And rather than relying on the owner's interpretation of accessibility, if you're passing the restaurant, pop in and do your own "access audit" to make sure all is to your liking.

Once you've found a restaurant that's up to scratch, you can start your evening with a drink in a nearby pub or bar. Even if the physical access is ok, it's worth noting the staff's reaction to serving disabled people.

If you get bad service or are insulted, you have legal recourse through part III of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Since December 1996, it has been unlawful to refuse service, or offer inferior service, to someone for disability-related reasons.

Someone who used the DDA to address poor treatment was Mary McKay. Mary, who has a learning disability, went for a drink with a friend at a pub in Essex, in July 2000. On her way in, a doorman told Mary's friend to "keep her in order". She was later confronted by an abusive landlord who shouted across a crowded bar that Mary and her friend shouldn't be sold any more drinks. Determined to do something, Mary, supported by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), brought a case against the brewery. She

summer at Dulwich Picture Gallery's café in London was to eat her food lying on the lawn outside. Angela has a back condition that gives her chronic pain, so lying down to eat is her only option. "I was fully confident that when my husband ordered the food he would explain my need to lie on



Look it over: make an access check before you book a reservation – it could save you a lot of hassle

the grass and everything would be fine," said Angela.

But the café refused to serve Angela on the grass and told her husband to go to a local sandwich shop. Angela had a further conversation with the café manager, but she remained inflexible, claiming they were sticking by their rules. A later appearance by the gallery manager, who "to be fair, was obviously very sorry", resulted in a menu being brought out. But it was too late: her husband had arrived from the sandwich shop. "I had lost my enthusiasm and appetite," said Angela.

A spokesperson for the

gallery expressed disappointment at Angela's treatment. "It is not policy to discriminate against disabled people," she said.

Hopefully, the next stage of the DDA, coming into force in October 2004, should make dining out more comfortable. Businesses will have to make adjustments to their premises when a physical aspect of their building makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use their service. This sounds good in theory but a major flaw exists, as the adjustments have to be considered financially

"reasonable" for the service provider to make.

Smart businesses will be making these changes now as part of routine maintenance work, but it doesn't take a genius to foresee many business owners pleading poverty once October 2004 comes around.

Even though there are obstacles to negotiate, the reward of a good feed in good company makes a bit of forward planning worth it. And come 2004, who knows, maybe all those inaccessible eateries may have had their chips. **DRC helpline: 08457 622 633 text: 08457 622 644.**

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ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

Dear Ann

- love and loneliness
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Ann Dambrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides.

Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Time for a change

I am 46 and disabled. I have just been made redundant from my job as an engineer with British Telecom. I'm rather fed up but trying to remain optimistic.

What I really want to do now is get into some form of self-employment. I'm just not sure how to go about getting reliable information.

John, Dorset

It can be quite a struggle getting into self-employment, but it can also be very satisfying. This is an opportunity for you to do something quite different.

Business Link can be useful for advice. Try their helpline or, better still, there may be a local branch in your phone directory. You can also get in touch with your local chamber of commerce.

You could do something which uses your existing expertise. Would you, perhaps, be able to offer telecommunications advice to disabled people?

Alternatively, this may be the time to explore new avenues. You could consider going to a local evening class to learn something new.

Van plan

I am married to a man whose nine-year-old daughter, Georgie, has a rare condition which means she has no movement from the waist down. She has a reading age of four.

Her mother will not let us use a specially adapted van at the weekends, when Georgie visits us. We can't afford to go to court and can't get legal aid. I want to tell my story and even try to take it to 10 Downing Street. There has to be help out there. Please help.

Zoe, e-mail

I don't understand the problem of the van. Does it belong to Georgie's mother? If it does,

you can't insist on using it, and if it is yours then you can use it as you like and she can't stop you using it for Georgie.

Have you been to the Citizens Advice Bureau? They can provide advice and can also recommend a solicitor who may give you legal advice free of charge. You may also find the Children's Legal Centre in Colchester helpful. They have an advice line.

Rather than contacting Number 10, who are likely to pass you on to local services, it would be more effective to talk to your MP, preferably at his or her regular surgery. Local MPs have a good deal of influence.

Your library will give you the exact details.

Do let me know how you get on.

Life lessons

I have been disabled with rheumatoid arthritis for 16 years. I have had all sorts of joint replacements. Despite this I have been involved with a number of organisations, including PHAB, Arthritis Care and Riding for the Disabled, and I designed a potting/bench seat suitable for a wheelchair user.

Now I would like to become a "life coach". I have recently returned to college to do a counselling course. What do you think I should do next? The only organisations I know about are quite expensive.

Nicola, Chester

I was really interested to read about all the activities you have been involved in. I wish I had room to list them all.

No doubt the tutor on your counselling course could give

you advice on suitable courses. Also the local authority running evening and other classes in your area may be able to suggest suitable courses.

Have you considered contacting the Open University? They can be very helpful to disabled students and can sometimes reduce fees.

Wheel problem

I am serving a life sentence – 26 years to date – and am about to be transferred to an open prison before my release in about a year's time.

I am 50 and have chronic multi-joint arthritis, ischaemia, cerebral vascular disease and left ventricular heart failure.

I have been awarded the higher rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component, although this has been suspended for a while.

I now need a powered wheelchair which is suitable for road use, but such a vehicle is not provided by the NHS. When I get my DLA back, will I be able to use it to get the wheelchair I need?

Michael, Norwich

I was sorry to hear that your DLA at the higher rate was suspended but hope it has been or will be reinstated.

I have been told by Motability that, if you get the DLA mobility component at the higher rate, you are entitled to have a power outdoor chair. I didn't gather from them that your situation would cause a problem.

If you want to pursue this possibility, the Motability customer information service is very helpful.

In order to use the mobility component of DLA towards the cost of a wheelchair under the Motability scheme, you must be eligible to receive it for the next two years plus eight weeks or for three years plus eight weeks. In the latter case you would be eligible for just over £5,000.

I hope you have success.

Help at the end of the phone



DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psychotherapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

Business Link national helpline, tel: 0845 600 9006, www.businesslink.org

Children's Legal Centre advice line, tel: 01206 873820, www2.essex.ac.uk/clc

Motability customer information centre, tel: 01279 635 666, www.motability.co.uk

The Open University national course enquiry line, tel: 0800 333 0087, www.open.ac.uk

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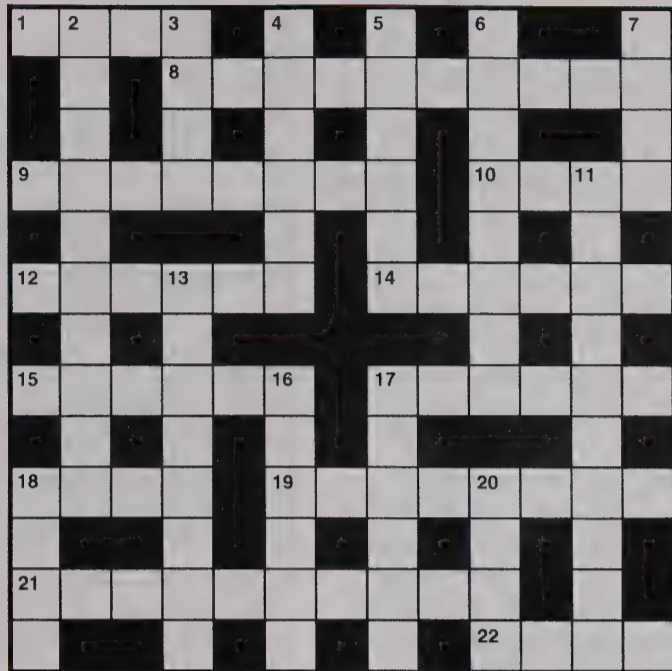
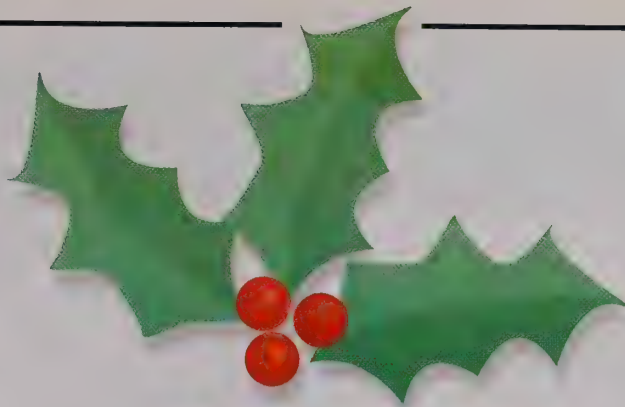
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9. See 8 Across
10. Santa Claus carries presents in one (4)
12. The River Jordan forms part of its eastern border (6)
14. Sporting activity people enjoy on winter holiday (6)
15. Building for exhibiting antiquities (6)
17. Its chimes mark the start of a new year (3,3)
18. When King Wenceslas looked out, the snow was ____ and
crisp and even (4)
19. Rudolph is Santa's favourite one (8)
21. Small South American rodent (10)
22. This duo had a 1984 hit single with *Last Christmas* (4)

DOWN

2. It is served with roast turkey at Christmas (5,5)
3. Does Santa get covered in it when he comes down the chimney? (4)
4. Full of happiness (6)
5. Beautiful women (6)
6. Something people are thankful for (8)
7. ____ the hall with boughs of holly (4)
11. This pantomime features the Ugly Sisters (10)
13. What the lords are doing in *The Twelve Days Of Christmas* (1-7)
16. Danny, the Liverpool footballer (6)
17. Harness round a horse's head (6)
18. ____ Whittington, another classic pantomime (4)
20. A match which neither side wins (4)

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN
ILLUSTRATION BY SAM GILLESPIE
ANSWERS ON PAGE 32

CROSSWORD SPONSORED BY
Creating opportunities with disabled people
LEONARD CHESHIRE

CANDID DAN

Dan goes to Spain – and so does the rain

With some rotten events in recent times, it was with great relief that Beck and I packed our bags in October for Mallorca, keeping our precise location a mystery. With a gorgeous island to explore and an all-inclusive bar and mountains of food to get through, we weren't going to be disturbed.

Things didn't get off to a great start. On the outward flight I experienced the curse of all fliers, going partially deaf. Beck was aware of this but still kept talking to me, with me nodding in all the right places. I wondered what I'd been agreeing with and wasn't too confident that it was all complimentary. After all, why would she break the habit of the last three years?

Thankfully, my ears cleared by the time we reached our hotel room, conveniently located up loads of stone steps. These provided us with most of our exercise for the week, which, according to madam, I needed, as my fondness for the hotel's mini cake squares and self service beer pump prompted her to liken me to Homer Simpson. I think she'd forgotten that I could now hear every hurtful syllable again.

Still, my newly acquired cartoon-esque "girth" didn't stop me walking for hours around Palma, Pollenca and other parts of the island, taking in cathedrals, old architecture and pavement bars unlike any in London or Chester. There was one nasty reminder of home though – a thorough drenching and a squelchy ride home in, according to a waiter, the worst weather in 50 years. A sudden feeling of being hexed fell upon us after hearing this.

In what seemed like the blink of an eye, we were on our way home again, eagerly discussing where to go and what we wanted from next year's hols. Cake squares and beer pumps were mandatory.

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What's on

The Carers Training Unit will hold a series of training courses, including Young Carers: Research, Good Practice & the Law, 5 December, Carers Benefits: Advanced, 10 December and The New NHS: Structure & Implications, 18 December. Tel: 020 7566 7632, email: training@ukcarers.org, www.carersonline.org.uk

The Limbless Association will hold a health and fitness day for lower limb amputees, 7 December, Littledown Centre, Bournemouth. The day will include practical demonstrations, one-to-one instruction and strengthening exercises and fitness techniques. Manufacturers of prosthetic limbs will also be attending. A £5 registration fee, refundable on attendance, is payable. Contact Danny Crates, email: danny@limbless-association.org, Tel: 020 8788 1777.

Inclusive Technology will hold their Special Needs Fringe, 8-10 January 2003, Kensington Olympia Hotel, London. It will include a full assistive technology and special needs exhibition, including stands from Crick Software Inclusive Technology, Dynavox, Liberator, Possum and others, and will showcase software and access devices that enable people with learning difficulties or physical and sensory needs to take part in education. A programme of free seminars will run alongside the fringe. Contact Nigel Wallace, Tel: 01457 819790. Email: nigel@inclusive.co.uk.

The Disabled Living Centres Council and the National Centre for Independent Living will hold From Paternalism to Consumerism, 4 February 2003, Gilbert Murray Conference Centre, Leicester University. The conference will look at how direct payments can offer disabled people greater choice when buying assistive technology devices. The day will also include workshops on the DDA and assistive technology, direct payments and assistive technology and how to find the right product for you. Bookings must be made by 13 December. Contact Barry Clarke, Fax: 020 7582 2469, email: barry@ncil.org.uk.

Thrive, the charity which gets disabled people involved in gardening, have just announced their short course programme for February-April. Courses include planning a year-round therapeutic horticultural programme, 17 February, Northwich, setting up and running a garden therapy programme for people with learning difficulties, 18 February, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, horticultural skills day, 13 March, Nantwich and willow weaving and sculpture, Chesterfield, 11 April. £70 for members, £99 non-members. Contact Sue Twigg, tel: 0118 968 5688, email: susan@thrive.org.uk

The NHS Service Delivery and Organisation will hold Delivering Research for Better Health Services, 19 March 2003, Church House, Westminster. Aimed at those concerned with the delivery and management of evidence-based healthcare, the conference will discuss areas including what types of research NHS managers find useful, research to improve the delivery and organisation of services and involving service users and carers. Contact Healthcare Events, tel: 020 8541 1399, email: info@healthcare-events.co.uk.

Websites

The European Disability Forum website contains information on a wide range of disability issues, including social policy, a charter of fundamental rights, transport and social exclusion. There are also specific group sections, including one on women's issues, which provides information on equal opportunities in employment, vocational training and promotion, as well as sustainable pension schemes for older women. www.edf-feph.org

Deafsign is an information website on deafness and sign language, approved by the National Grid for Learning. The site contains general information on deafness, welfare and social issues and a British Sign Language (BSL) finger spelling translator. The site also has sign language books for sale, and a range of full colour posters which show BSL greeting signs. www.deafsign.com

Courses

The Open University have launched Knowledge, Information and Care, a new course aimed at health and social care professionals and lay people with an interest in the area. The course is based around four separately themed CD-Roms, Defining the individual patient or client, the evidence base, information for service users and the public and communities and populations. The course can be studied on its own or can contribute towards an open University diploma or degree. www.open.ac.uk/shsw

DID YOU KNOW? DN is available on tape, disk and by e-mail. Contact Talking Newspapers, see imprint, page 2.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1. Ibis 8. O Come All Ye 9. Faithful 10. Sack 12. Israel 14. Skiing 15. Museum 17. Big Ben 18. Deep 19. Reindeer 21. Chinchilla 22. Wham
DOWN: 2. Bread Sauce 3. Soot 4. Joyful 5. Belles 6. Blessing 7. Deck 11. Cinderella 13. A-leaping 16. Murphy 17. Bridle 18. Dick 20. Draw

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• **Tender**

• **Recruitment (on pages 34 to 38)**


Social Care Institute for Excellence

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) seeks proposals on key areas within its work programme:

Teaching and Learning in the New Social Work Degree: Communicating with children, adults and those with particular communication needs

This practice review will consider current practice in this area of social work education, identify supporting materials and contribute to a resource guide for providers of the new degree in social work.

Innovative Fostering Schemes

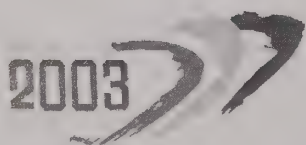
This practice review will identify initiatives in fostering services and innovative fostering schemes, and consider the ways in which they have delivered more effective services, improved outcomes and contributed to the development of good fostering practice.

The closing date for responses to each of these proposals is **4 December 2002**

For full details, see the 'What's New' section at www.scie.org.uk

Telephone SCIE on 020 7089 6840.

knowledge for better practice



Highlight the fight for civil rights of Britain's 8.5 million disabled people...

Invitation to tender – Producer disability rights exhibition.

As part of 2003 European Year of Disabled People, the Disability Rights Commission and The Greater London Authority are working in partnership to deliver an exhibition raising awareness of disability as a discrimination issue and highlighting the role that disabled people have played in challenging their exclusion from society. The exhibition will run during the month of September at City Hall, in London before moving on to other venues elsewhere in the UK.

We anticipate the exhibition will feature a variety of media including photographs, campaigning posters and text. It might also include short films, installations, interactive displays, historical artefacts and empathetic models. The exhibition will need to be designed for display at City Hall and also be suitable for transportation to other locations.

The DRC and GLA are seeking to appoint an experienced exhibition producer to research, plan and deliver the project. This will involve securing materials and testimonies, obtaining interesting artefacts and mounting the exhibition itself in such a way that is a stimulating experience for visitors.

To notify us of your interest to bid to tender please telephone Tom Berry at the Disability Rights Commission on 020 7211 4081 for an application pack by Friday 20th December.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Disability Rights Commission

Tower Hamlets is a distinctive, unique London Borough that is home to a diverse vibrant, multicultural community. As part of an exciting regeneration programme, we aim to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the area. It's also an ideal opportunity to further your career.

Social Services

Rehabilitation Officer

£25,317 - £26,640

The newly re-configured Disabilities Resource Centre for Adults at Southern Grove, near Mile-End Station, has an Information/Advice Service, a CafE with Internet access, a nine-bed short-stay residential Unit with assessment, emergency, and respite facilities, and a Day Opportunities Service. Also housed within the Resource Centre are the Physical and Sensory Disabilities Care Management Teams, the Disability Advocacy Network and a number of other Voluntary Groups. A multi-purpose room with a kitchen, lounge, and small office has been furnished and decorated by "Seeability" with colours and textures appropriate to those with a visual impairment. This room is used to support groups of users in developing daily living skills.

The Sensory Disabilities Team require a qualified Rehabilitation Officer to undertake Assessments and provide rehabilitation services to people with visual impairment in the Borough. You should be enthusiastic, insightful, and keen to join a progressive Team where you can put new ideas into practice. You will work alongside a second Rehabilitation Officer, Assessment and Review Officers, Care Manager, Social Worker, Senior Practitioner (Dual Sensory Loss), Admin. Officer and the Team Manager, in a supportive and motivated Team.

This is a job with great variety in a Team that is central to user-led developments at the Resource Centre.

Ref: 9802NOV023

For further details regarding the post please contact Mike Gerrie Team Manager on Tel: 020 7364 6730.

Closing date: 11 December 2002.

For an application pack, please call 020 7364 4488 (24 Hour Recruitment Line).

A special Minicom service is available for those with a hearing or speech impairment on 020 7364 4489.

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1998 S Escort Chairman, 14,000 miles, P.A.S. & lowering suspension	£9,500
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1998 R Courier 1.3 Auto, Universal, P.A.S., 1 owner, 6,000 miles	£7,995
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1996 P Vauxhall Combo Chairman	£6,495
1996 N Transit, Semi Hi Roof. Tail lift, 24,000 miles	£8,750
1996 N Transit Diesel, Semi Hi Roof. Tail lift, 15,000 miles	£9,250
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UK Disability Forum for European Affairs is a lead organisation in the Year. The below two activities will highlight awareness, be campaign tools and if desirable allow organisations to generate project funds.

- 1) Limited edition A3 calendar produced by disabled people with 12 monthly themes
- 2) Coloured copper enamel pin badges (100) display boxed, which could be distributed for donation of £1 doubling your organisations investment

Calendar unit price £5 incl p & p (1-5 copies) £3.50 incl p & p (6-99 copies) £2.75 incl p & p (100+ copies) Pin badges £50 per box (100) incl p& p

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tel: 020 7619 7320, or contact
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• Recruitment (on pages 34 to 38)

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London Arts, the London office of the new arts funding and development organisation for England, is pleased to support the **European Year of Disabled People 2003**.

If you would like to be on the mailing list for information about associated arts activities in London, please send your contact details to:

**Francesca Bondy
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2 Pear Tree Court, London EC1R ODS,
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or textphone 020 7608 4100**

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Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

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Tel: 020 8998 9403

• Recruitment (on pages 34 to 38)

Employment Support for Disabled People

The Jobcentre Plus network can provide advice on employment and job retention to disabled people who are facing additional employment barriers associated with their disability.

Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) are usually based in Jobcentres or Jobcentre Plus offices and can provide:

- employment assessment
- job seeking advice and support
- information on specialist employment programmes for disabled people
- advice on remaining in work
- advice and information to employers employing disabled people

For more information on the support available to disabled people looking for work get in touch with your local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office.



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Part of the Department
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Leeds Centre for Integrated Living, Armley Grange Drive LS12



An Executive Committee of Disabled People and Leeds City Council's Social Services established the Leeds Centre for Integrated Living (LCIL) in January 1999. LCIL provides services that assist disabled people to exercise choice and take control over their lives.

You will develop and deliver training programmes for LCIL. The Trainer will be supervised by an LCIL Service & Project Co-ordinator and will work with LCIL's established network of sessional trainers. Candidates must demonstrate:

- Previous experience of developing and delivering high quality DET
- An understanding of and commitment to the social model of disability
- The ability to research and develop new and imaginative training programmes
- The ability to promote and advertise training programmes
- A willingness to work as part of the LCIL staff team and to promote the Aims and Objectives of LCIL

LCIL provides services developed and run by disabled people for disabled people and is moving towards independent status. It is anticipated that, because of the duties and requirements of this post and LCIL services, the person appointed will be a disabled person.

The Department is committed to the training and development of all employees. Leeds City Council is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Interviews scheduled week commencing 20 January 2003.

For an informal discussion please contact LCIL on: Telephone (0113) 214 3599, Minicom (0113) 214 3598 or Email: leedscil@btconnect.com

For application forms and job outline please ring answerphone service (24 hours) on Leeds (0113) 247 7965 (voice) or Leeds (0113) 247 8769 (Minicom only) or apply in writing enclosing a large self addressed envelope to Director of Social Services, Selectapost 9, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8QB. Please mention if you require the information in a specific format.

Closing date: 19th December 2002.

"WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY"

The City Council has a No Smoking Policy

FULL-TIME POST(S) SUITABLE FOR JOB SHARING

For more information on jobs with Leeds City Council see www.leeds.gov.uk/vacancies



ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

DISABILITY & WELFARE ADVISOR

3 days (19.5 hrs) per wk – £12,685 - £14,315 per annum (inclusive)

In order to comply fully with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Royal Academy of Music has created the post of Disability & Welfare Advisor to assist with the implementation of its Disability Strategy. The post holder will play a key role in helping to co-ordinate and develop the Academy's understanding of welfare and disability issues, working closely with staff and students, as well as calling in external expertise as necessary. The post holder will have a keen interest in helping those who have a learning disability, particularly dyslexia. The post is for three years in the first instance.

You will have:

- a degree and/or equivalent qualification in welfare and disability issues;
- professional experience of providing such advice within the HE sector;
- a thorough understanding of the nature of vocational training, for which experience in a music conservatoire would be of great advantage;
- the skills to develop and co-ordinate an integrated guidance strategy suited to all types of Academy students and staff.

For an application form and further information, please contact Personnel Department (Job Ref.02/17), Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT.

e-mail personnel@ram.ac.uk Tel: **020 7873 7373**

Closing date for applications: 4th December 2002

ENVIRONMENT

Access Officer

HOVE TOWN HALL

£20,562 - £23,889 PRO RATA PA - 18.5 HRS/WK

We are seeking an experienced and knowledgeable Access Officer to work at our Hove offices. They should be able to initiate action to secure access for all, promote best practice in access and advise on facilities for people with sensory impairment or physical disability throughout the City of Brighton and Hove. A full understanding of best practice in disabled access and the implementation of the DDA is essential. ■ For an informal discussion call Rob Fraser on 01273 292380.

For further information and an application form please contact (quoting reference EN1148): Recruitment Shop, Brighton & Hove City Council, Ground Floor, Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square, Brighton BN1 1JP. Telephone: 01273 292284. E-mail: jobs@brighton-hove.gov.uk ■ CVs will not be accepted. ■ Closing date: 13 December 2002.



Minicom 01273 291490

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Brighton & Hove

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- We undertake the checks on behalf of employers of staff working with children and vulnerable adults, in the care, education, leisure and health sectors
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For further information about our service please call 01933 440544 and ask for Checkpoint

• Accommodation



**Transhouse anticipate
having a limited
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transitional housing
in the Shropshire
area, for spinal cord
injured people.**

**Please contact us
for more details on
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Email: Transhouse77@hotmail.com**



Looking for comfortable, residential accommodation either for yourself or a client in Greater Manchester?

If your answer to this question is yes and you're visually impaired or have a physical disability, then Henshaws Society for Blind People's Pendleton Centre in Salford near Manchester may be just what you're looking for.

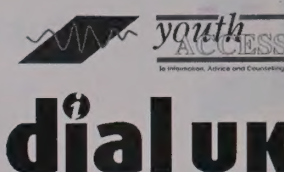
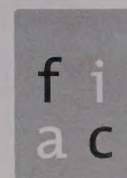
In pleasant surroundings, conveniently located for shops, public transport and other amenities, the centre - which exceeds minimum care standards - offers fully-furnished flats, a friendly atmosphere, lots of social activities, and staff who are trained to cater for the needs of disabled residents.

If you're 19 or over and you think this is what you're looking for, please contact the Pendleton Centre Manager, Laura Morton, on 0161 707 6747.

The Pendleton Centre, 232 Eccles Old Road, Salford M6 8AG
Tel: 0161 707 6747 • email: Pendleton@hsbp.co.uk • web: www.hsbp.co.uk



Inclusive Quality Project



This important, independent Project is a joint initiative of three advice networks: FIAC, DIAL UK and Youth Access, with funding from the Legal Services Commission. The aim of the project is to support small community based organisations that provide free advice services to some of the most socially excluded and disadvantaged individuals and communities in England and Wales. IQP Development Workers assist groups to develop and achieve the Community Legal Service Quality Mark standard. The project is funded until March 2005.

Secondments, part-time and flexible working arrangements will be considered. Training and development programme provided.

A unique opportunity to use or gain consultancy and development skills to support quality community advice

DEVELOPMENT WORKERS / TRAINEE DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

required to cover LONDON (3 posts) and EAST ANGLIA (1)

Salary £24,954 initially for Trainees, £26,258 - £27,386 for full Development Workers (London posts) plus 5% pension contribution

IQP is seeking to complete our team of Development Workers to provide direct assistance to community advice organisations in South, East and West London and East Anglia. We are looking for skilled and experienced people to move straight into Development Worker posts OR people with good skills and abilities but who may not have experience and knowledge, to join us initially as trainees.

Successful applicants for full Development Worker posts will be self-motivated with a sound understanding of the organisational challenges faced by smaller advice and community organisations. Familiarity with the advice sector and the Community Legal Service Quality Mark is essential as is awareness of issues facing vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups such as disabled people, black and ethnic minorities and young people. Successful applicants will be able to work independently and with sensitivity. They will be excellent communicators with the ability to motivate and influence others.

Alternatively, we are offering a unique opportunity for people to join us as trainees. After passing an intensive training, coaching and mentoring programme lasting 3 months, trainees will progress to full Development Worker status. Successful applicants for trainee posts will be self-motivated, effective communicators with some experience of the advice sector and working with quality standards. A basic understanding of the Community Legal Service and advice sector will be coupled with an awareness of issues affecting groups providing services for socially excluded groups. IQP will provide information and skills based training and support on the CLS, the Quality Mark, successful development and consultancy work and effective training.

Applications to be submitted by Wednesday 11 December 2002. Interviews will be held on: Wed 18 or Thurs 19 December 2002.

For an application pack call IQP on 020 7407 6500, e-mail IQP@fiac.org.uk or write to IQP, c/o FIAC, 12th Floor, New London Bridge House, 25 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9ST. Please quote reference DNDW.

Department for Transport

Appointment of members to the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

The Secretary of State for Transport, is seeking nominations for membership to the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC). Applications for the post of Chairman are also invited.

The Committee

DPTAC was set up under the Transport Act 1985 to advise the Government on the transport and mobility needs of disabled people. The Committee also has a non-statutory role in advising Government on improving access to the built environment for disabled people.

The full Committee meets six times a year. Successful applicants should expect to devote a minimum of 12-15 days a year to the work of DPTAC. The precise commitment will depend on the preference of individual members to participate in task groups. Members are also expected to contribute to the work of DPTAC by correspondence and through knowledge pools. The Chairman's role is likely to be more time consuming and the successful applicant could expect to spend up to 5 days a month on Committee work.

Key skills

Those appointed to the Committee will be people with relevant experience in transport and disability issues gained either as a professional working in those fields, or as a transport consumer. Members will be expected to apply that experience and to take a broad national perspective across the full range of transport issues affecting disabled people. They will also be experienced in Committee work at local, regional or national level.

Appointments

At least half of the Committee's twenty members must be disabled people. In making appointments the Secretary of State for Transport will also want to ensure that the membership represents the widest range of transport and disability interests and that it strikes a balance in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. All appointments are made on a personal basis; members do not represent the interests of particular organisations.

Members are not paid for their work on the Committee, but travel, subsistence and other reasonable expenses (including child care/dependents care) will be reimbursed. The appointment is for 3 years from 1 July 2003.

Further information, including details on how to apply, can be obtained from the DFT's Mobility and Inclusion Unit at 1/18, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR; or by telephone on 020 7944 8021 or 020 7944 3277 (Minicom); or email miu@dft.gsi.gov.uk. Details are also available on the web at www.mobility-unit.dft.gov.uk or www.dptac.gov.uk

Final applications must be submitted by close on **Friday 28 February 2003**.



Positive Management Advisor

The Jennifer Trust is a national charity working to support children and adults who have spinal muscular atrophy, a neuromuscular condition. We are seeking to appoint a Positive Management Advisor. This is a new post. The post holder will have experience of working with physically disabled children and adults and have health care experience. The role will include the identification of gaps in current resources and information, and will play an active role in the development of suitable information for our user group.

Working closely with health care professionals and families to ensure that local proactive care is available and is appropriate for the care needs of individuals with SMA.

This full time post is based at our Stratford upon Avon Head Office. The successful candidate will be able to work on their own initiative but also as part of a team providing a range of services to a UK wide membership.

We offer a pleasant working environment and a salary of £20,000 - £24,000 dependant on experience.

Please phone 0870 774 3651 or email: heather.brown@jtsma.org.uk for further information and an application pack. Closing date for receipt of application is **Friday 20th December 2002** - Interviews will be held early in January 2003.

The Jennifer Trust for Spinal Muscular Atrophy

Reg Charity No 327669



DELECTABLE DELIVERIES

We were flooded with entries for last year's hamper give-away, so Waitrose have stepped in for a second time to offer DN readers another chance to eat and drink in style this Christmas. Three lucky readers will be taking delivery of a Waitrose Shaftesbury hamper worth £79! This lavishly packed, rustic, willow hamper contains a very special selection of goodies from the store, including Winter Hill Shiraz, Roger Vidal smoked duck pâté, irresistible savouries and a luxurious choice of confectionery and biscuits. So, postpone your dieting plans until the New Year and get your entry coupon in. In the meantime, check out Waitrose Direct for a great range of festive groceries and gifts. Visit www.waitrose.com, pay securely online and have your gift delivered direct to the door. Alternatively, freephone 0800 188881.



WAITROSE
food shops of the John Lewis Partnership

LIGHT UP YOUR XMAS

For a great value Christmas gift, Ann Davies highlights Marks & Spencer's Manor House Hurricane Lamp (see page 21). This beautiful lamp, with its amethyst glass detailing, gold trim and clear glass base, measures H29cm/D15cm and costs £20. All you need do is add a simple candle to create a cosy Christmas ambience in your home. We've got two to give away to DN readers this month, courtesy of the store, so for a chance to win, return the coupon to us as shown. For stockists, call 02072661234 or visit www.marksandspencer.com



MARKS & SPENCER

WINTER WARMERS

For yet more tasty gift ideas, Whittard of Chelsea bring us their Cool Yule selection. To sample some deliciously original flavours over the festive season, why not have a go at winning a set of stylishly presented tea and coffee from this top selling range? DN has five Cool Yule tea and coffee tin sets (worth £10 each) up for grabs. Winners will enjoy black tea with the flavours of orange peel cinnamon and spice, and pre-ground Arabica coffee blended with cinnamon and chocolate. See coupon for entry details. For information on your nearest Whittard store call 08000154394.



Whittard
OF CHELSEA

to enter Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send FOR FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

☐ Waitrose ☐ Marks & Spencer ☐ Whittard



terms & conditions

• closing date for entrants: 13.12.02.
• Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Waitrose Ltd, Marks & Spencer and Whittard of Chelsea. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

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DN's three part holiday series begins with Malta, the Rockies (in a motor caravan), special interest group holidays and how to travel with oxygen

2003: YEAR OF DISABLED PEOPLE

What's happening, and what international disability organisations have achieved so far

SKIN DEEP

Tattoos, implants, facelifts – are they worth it?

GOOD GRUB

Disabled chefs talk about food – and themselves. This month: Michael Caines at Gidleigh Park Hotel

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DN

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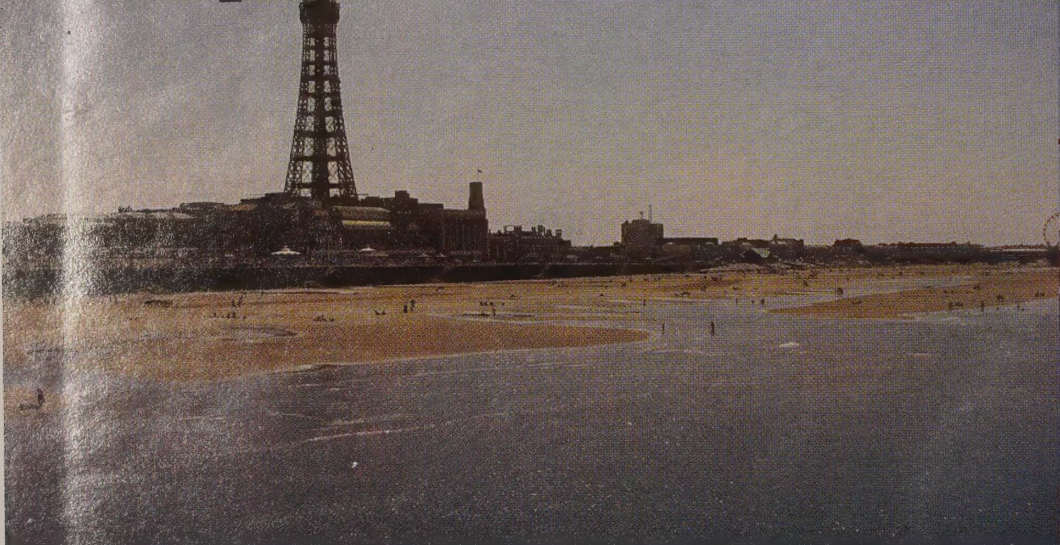
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